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Network of Excellence

# Elite Networks, NGOs and Governance

edited by Frane Adam

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, vast amount of literature was written about the significance of civil society for democracy and functioning of state institutions. The sphere of civil society is often perceived as correction and complement to political representation and prevailing political parties, for whom it is known, they do not enjoy considerable trust among citizens. The widespread notion of European Union as a national elite-driven project, detached from ordinary citizens, thus comes with no surprise. Also from the inside of the EU apparatus, ideas in favor of strong and influential civil society frequently emerge. In spite of considerable part of organized civil society being embedded in national and local environment, we are facing seemingly unavoidable process of trans-nationalization and Europeanization that appears logical regarding globalization trends and intention to create the European civil society and public. It is beyond doubt, that these processes are positive and need to be encouraged. It is however problematic, when civil society is perceived – at least implicitly – as homogeneous totality and therefore refused to be seen as structurally fragmented and pluralistic. Questionable is also the assumption of civil society being a synonym for direct, mass participatory democracy, as we can consider naive the notion of civic participation directly influencing the decision-making and governance on the EU level. Far more realistic is the perception of organized civil society that stresses importance of its consultative role, since expert knowledge and information it possesses can really attribute to the quality of political decision-making.

Nevertheless, it remains an undisputable fact that NGOs and voluntary associations are gaining in importance. They connect and act trans-nationally, i.e. on the European level, their significance will increase in years to come, cooperation and competition will emerge among them, as well as in their relation to political actors.

The question we are posing is, whether is it not inevitable in this process for NGOs and associations to develop in the direction of professionalism, management and expertise, what strengthens the position of leadership and reduces the importance of membership. It is however not necessary that the linkage between leaders and members is totally absent while certain actions are not feasible without mobilization and active role of at least some parts of membership. We are witnessing the transformation of NGOs – especially when active on the European level – into advocacy groups, in similarity with Skocpol's findings for the

American case. Although this cannot be generalized or applied to the whole spectrum of NGOs and associations, we still might speak of the existence of specific type of elitism within these organizations as well as between them and other organized actors. What kind of elitism is this and how we can discern it from political elitism for example, yet needs to be studied. For the purpose of successful realization of their interests and propositions, NGO leadership has to connect and networking with political, business and scientific elites on national as well as trans-national level. On the other side we are often witnessing migration from the NGO sphere into politics or business, which means that civil society can function as a reservoir for recruitment of political and other elites.

Papers presented at this academic workshop are striving for detailed analysis of the relation between professionalisation and elitism, networks in which leadership is included, relation between political elite and NGO leaders, as well as the influence of NGOs on governance on national and the European level.

The first segment of presented papers is based on a pilot study carried out in Slovenia and Poland and represents an attempt to detect the elite networks into which NGO leaders are included. The second part is dedicated to the question of how national political elites (in Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and Poland) react to the EU context and what is their impact on the evolution or de-evolution of democracy, whereas the third section speaks of trans-nationalization of the NGO sphere. We sincerely hope to shed some new light on some important – and till now under-researched – aspects of civil society and democratic transformation in the new EU member states.

Frane Adam, editor

Ljubljana, June, 2007

# PART I.

## NGOs' Leadership and Networks

### NGO Leadership's Relations with Other Social Actors

#### Research Report

Anna Gasior-Niemiec, Artur Koscianski and Pawel Zaleski  
(Draft 01/2007)

Between February and June 2007 a pilot study was conducted by a research team consisting of Anna Gasior-Niemiec, Artur Koscianski, and Pawel Zaleski, affiliated at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. The study, being part of a research theme 'National elites and their trans-national networks', had been elaborated within the framework of the Research Group 5 of the CONNEX Network of Excellence and carried out as a joint research project with a Slovenian team affiliated at the University of Ljubljana, headed by Frane Adam.

The study included a series of 11 pilot, semi-structured interviews (based on a model questionnaire designed by Frane Adam and his collaborators) with representatives of Warsaw-based non-governmental organisations which constitute leadership of the so called Third Sector in Poland (cf. Gasior-Niemiec, Glinski, 2007). The methodological note included at the end of the present report reflects *inter alia* on the mode of the interviewees' selection, the manner in which the interviews were conducted and problems encountered during the pilot study as well as suggesting a modified methodological framework to be considered before further research is undertaken. The semi-structured interviews were complemented with a few informal interviews conducted with selected Polish experts on civil society issues, relevant NGO document analyses and partial literature review.

The basic aim of the pilot research was to collect preliminary data indicating the Third Sector leadership's relations with other social actors (political parties, parliament, government, other NGOs on national, international and EU level, European Parliament, European Commission, business sector, media and science, culture etc.). The initial research questions which had animated the study concerned the positioning of the NGO leadership vis-à-vis/ national and transnational elites. More specifically, the pilot study was expected to produce data shedding some light on a few of the initial hypotheses put forward by the Slovenian-Polish team. The major hypotheses stated that:

- a) NGO leadership has become elitist at the national level;
- b) NGO leadership is interested in joining transnational/European elite networks;
- c) NGO leadership is blocked in their attempts to join the transnational/European

networks by the existence of gatekeepers located at the national level;  
d) the nation-level gate-keepers are primarily located in the national political arena.

Our assumption was that by tracing:

- turning points and changes in the strategic aims and scope of activities by the NGO leadership,
  - networks through which the NGO leaders communicate with the other social actors who are anchored either within the national or transnational arenas,
  - resources that are at stake in the network members' communication and exchange practices,
  - and factors that the NGO leadership see as main obstacles in pursuing their strategies
- we would be able to verify and modify the initial hypotheses and prepare ground for further research.

## **PART ONE : BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE NGO CASES INCLUDED IN THE POLISH PILOT STUDY**

### **Case 1:**

#### **Fundacja Instytut Spraw Publicznych – Foundation Institute of Public Affairs**

The ISP was established 18th January 1995 as a independent (self-directed) research institute for social and political studies. Since 1996 its directing bodies are the Management Board and Scientific Council. The staff of ISP has 40 members.

The ISP basic aims is to provide analysis for public life policy, to publish projects for future transitions in public life system, to create sociotechnics agenda, to initiate and maintain public discourse, and to build bridges between spheres of science, politics and the third sector.

The ISP Foundation represents a professional structure taking a part in new public management – it operates through a set of project-oriented laboratories employing scholars and administrative staff responsible for activities to do with government and self-governemnt, activities to do with other non-governmental organizations, activities to do with social science researchers associated with other institutes and universities. The ISP has legal status of public-benefit-association/organization, but it has not a clear organizational identity as a NGO.

### **Case 2:**

#### **Polska Fundacja Roberta Schumana – Polish Robert Schuman Foundation**

The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation was founded in 1991 by most eminent leaders of the Polish Solidarity movement with the aim to support the democratic transformation in the country and to encourage Poles to participate in the processes of unifying Europe. Its activities include disseminating knowledge of the European integration, educating for civic Europe and spreading the know how needed to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by the European integration. To this end, the Foundation has been involved in a number of activities ranging from high profile intellectual and political venues to street cultural events



and locally targeted training and competition projects as well as developing linkages with representatives of a variety of European institutions.

Its flag projects include: Polish European Meetings designed as a forum for an exchange of views and information on the EU; the Schuman Parade and the European Festival, School European Clubs - a program addressed to pupils, members and guardians of School European Clubs, Volunteer Movement - Bridge-Building in Europe - a program of international volunteer exchange, European Know-how for Local Communities - a program addressed to activists and officials of local governments and non-governmental organizations, the Training for Telewizja Polska S.A. (public television) - a series of training courses intended for TV journalists, Foreign Policy Seminar - a series of seminars intended for students which are held regularly at the seat of the Foundation.

The moment of Poland's accession to the EU might be perceived as a turning point as it has marked a shift in focus from political lobbying and high profile activities to more mass and know how oriented and locally target projects. Also, it has meant a shift of the bulk of the democracy-building programmes to the East and South (mainly Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia).

In terms of internal organization, Fundacja Schumana is characterized by an extremely lax and fluid managerial and employment structure complemented with a stable strategic council membership, a wide-ranging informal co-operative linkages and a considerable number of young volunteers. It does not offer a regular employment, relying on project-related short-term contracts. Still, it has recently launched an employee training programme. The loose employment structure results in relative autonomy of the particular employees and the particular Foundation programme activities. The Schuman Parade is the only event that involves the collaboration of all of the Foundation internal branches and human resources.

### **Case 3 (extended):**

#### **Biuro Obsługi Ruchu Inicjatyw Społecznych "BORIS" i jego organizacje stowarzyszeniowe: „Mazovia” i „Splot”**

#### **– Office of Services for Social Initiatives „BORIS” and its associated organizations: „Mazovia” and „Splot” “BORIS”**

BORIS was established in 1992 by a coalition of a few state, private and non-governmental organizations as a foundation to support development of the non-governmental sector in Poland. In 1999 it ceased to be a foundation and became an association. Its mission and strategies have remained stable, the scope of its activities encompassing local to European levels with the national level pushed to the background.

BORIS's activities include primarily consultations, workshops, information campaigns and "incubating" innovative civic programs to reinforce non-governmental sector and local communities. Its declared aims are to improve the management of NGOs, promote the integration of NGOs (to this end BORIS became for instance a member of the national Network of Non-governmental Support Organisations [SPLOT] and initiated the creation of a common representation for social organizations "Mazovia" in the Mazowsze Region), promote co-operative agreements between NGOs and governmental bodies and business

partners, disseminate knowledge about European integration, encourage idea of Local Activities Support Centres (CAL) and Local Information Centres across Poland as well as publishing a variety of practical manuals for NGOs and providing desktop services and facilities for small NGOs.

The moment of Poland's accession to the EU does not mark a turning point for the Association although the increased funding and training opportunities are readily acknowledged. One of the clearest indicators thereof is the fact that BORIS has earned a status of „ROszEFS” (Regionalny Ośrodek Szkoleniowy Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego) – Regional Centre of Training for the European Social Fund (ESF), which gives it a definite advantage in applying for European funding, implementing and supporting the implementation of programmes and projects financed by the ESF and other structural funds of the EU in Poland. Another side effect of the accession is the increasing shift of many of the BORIS services to the East and South (Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria).

In terms of internal organization, BORIS resembles a post-fordist type of organization: its basic structure is slim and flat, with a few of internal “branches” which are developed and managed relatively independent of one another by core managers-entrepreneurs employed by BORIS. Investment in professional development of its employees and long-term employment stability are features which distinguish BORIS from the majority of Polish NGOs. This is probably one of the major reasons why despite the relative autonomy of the internal branches and a great degree of individual managerial entrepreneurship and innovativeness on the part of their heads, BORIS has preserved a clear organizational identity as a NGO “infrastructural” organization.

### **Federacja Organizacji Służebnych “Mazovia”**

#### **– Federation of Social Service Organizations “Mazovia”**

“Mazovia” was created in 2001 as an infrastructure and lobbying organization to represent the interests of a number of NGOs operating in the Mazowsze Region, including Warsaw. Its establishment was preceded by the existence of an experimental informal group called GRIN, gathering leaders of Warsaw non-governmental organizations since 1997. Currently, there are 42 member organisations in the Mazovia Federation.

“Mazovia”'s strategic aims include supporting member organizations, offer consultation in the management of NGOs, monitor local government's actions and activities, represent the member organisations vis-à-vis the governmental and self-governmental bodies and lobby on behalf of the member NGOs and develop their international cooperation. One of the few explicit criteria to become a Mazovia member is to preserve an apolitical status, which means a commitment not to support or create coalitions with any party or political option. Others include a dedication to professionalism, transparency and innovativeness.

In terms of internal organization, the Mazovia Federation represents a fully professional modern structure congruent with trends in new public management – it operates through an office employing officers responsible for activities to do with government and self-governemnt, activities to do with member organizations, activities to do with programme to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Federation itself and a separate officer to do with PR of the Federation.

**Sieć Wspierania Organizacji Pozarządowych “SPLOT”**  
**-Network of Non-Governmental Support Organizations “SPLOT”**

“SPLOT” was founded by six leading Polish NGOs in 1994, however it was formally registered as an NGO network only in 2003. Its mission is to help building civil society in Poland through the support given in particular to non-governmental organisations, reinforcing their institutional and managerial capacities and acting for the partnership between the NGOs and state and municipal institutions.

Its primary activities include research on NGOs, creating data bases, counselling and training as well as facilitating the forging of common representations of several NGOs and preparing the NGO milieu for the challenges and opportunities related to the European integration. SPLOT has altogether 16 regional branches located in the major Polish cities, including Warsaw which is home to the most influential of the SPLOT members – the Klon/Jawor Association.

SPLOT has a status of „ROSzEFS” (Regionalny Ośrodek Szkoleniowy Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego) – Regional Centre of Training for the European Social Fund (ESF), which gives it a definite advantage in implementing and supporting the implementation of programmes and projects financed by the ESF and other structural funds of the EU by other NGOs, local government and business partners. This advantage needs a special emphasis in view of the fact that SPLOT has conferred the ROSzEFS status onto selected of its regional branches as well.

**Case 4:**

**Fundacja “Nasza Ziemia”**  
**Foundation “Our Earth”**

Pro-ecological organization maintaining mostly educational activities and organizing campaign “clean up the world”. Financed mainly by ministry of environment, local administration, some business sponsorship, about 1 mln. PLN a year budget.

**Case 5:**

**Fundacja Rozwoju Sztuki Filmowej**  
**Foundation for Development of Cinematic Art**

Cultural organization organizing festivals, shows, presentations, exhibitions. Financed mostly by municipality of Warsaw, ministry of culture, local governments. Annual budget from 100-500 000 PLN. Four years ago only 10 000 PLN.

**Case 6:**

**Fundacja Kultury Polskiej**  
**– Foundation of Polish Culture**

Fundacja Kultury Polskiej was established in 1987 as one of the first private foundations in Poland to take advantage of the liberalised law on private organizations and associations. It was founded by a number of celebrities involved in arts, culture and science in Poland and abroad. Its mission and strategy have remained oriented to promotion and development of Polish arts and culture ever since.

Its activities include primarily high profile public cultural events, arts competitions, support for young artists, fund-raising to support renovation of Polish cultural heritage. The Foundation's activities reach from local through national to the international level. The Foundation has three branches in Poland (Warsaw, Cracow and Poznan) and it helped to establish a kind of a twin-foundation in Ukraine.

Poland's accession to the European Union has not been indicated as a breakthrough point in the Foundation's "life" albeit there is an awareness that it has opened up many opportunities for NGOs. Those, however, are perceived as practically inaccessible at the moment, largely due to lacking know how on part of the Foundation's employees. Rather, the systemic breakthrough and the changes in the early 1990s which did away with "institutional" patronage and automatic sponsoring of cultural events are indicated as the turning point in the Foundation's life.

In organizational terms, the Foundation represents a traditional type of organization with a clear hierarchical structure and little degree of internal organisational autonomy, entrepreneurship and innovativeness. On the other hand, it also cherishes the traditional Polish patterns of involvement in social and cultural affairs, i.e. highly valuing informal and strictly voluntary and symbolic involvement of public figures and artists. It employs on a regular basis only very few administrative staff members. Management innovations and professional development strategies are missing. However, owing to strong informal linkages between its core animators, the uniting – professional and private - interest in arts and culture and still present cultural snobbism among the Polish elites, it has retained a stable, although obsolete, organizational profile.

#### **Case 7:**

#### **Katolickie Biuro Informacji i Inicjatyw Europejskich OCIPE**

#### **– Catholic Office for European Information and Initiatives OCIPE**

KBiIE OCIPE is a special status Catholic organization registered in Poland in 1992 by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Administration following an application filed by the then Director of the Polish Jesuits. The Polish Office of OCIPE was conceived as an offspring of a mother organization Office Catholique d'Information et d'Initiative pour l'Europe which had itself been established in Strasbourg in 1956 by the initiative of Jean Julien Weber, the then bishop of Strasbourg. The other offspring OCIPE organizations exist in Brussels (now performing the role of the OCIPE headquarters) and Budapest.

The self-proclaimed mission of the OCIPE is to monitor, interpret and publicise the idea of European integration from a Catholic perspective as well as building linkages between European institutions and Catholic organizations. The mission has been recently enriched with an explicit aim of training Catholics to be conscious and competent citizens of the United Europe. The scope of activities has also been shifted from a European – national (before the accession) to local to European reach, with the nation-level visibly pushed now to the background. The strategy has undergone a significant change as well: there has been a shift from the initial intellectual, academic, political and analytic modes of action through direct involvement in lobbying at the national and European levels to an increased focus on local training action targeted especially at journalists, local community activists, public

administration officers and leaders of local Catholic organizations. Also, the membership has become gradually inclusive of lay persons.

The establishment of the European Union, together with its dedication to citizen information and education and its Eastern Enlargement are indicated as two turning points in the »life« of OCIPE. Also, the European bodies are openly indicated as primary sources of funding for the OCIPE activities.

In organizational terms, OCIPE represents a hybrid form with a slim hierarchical internal structure and an emphasis on entrepreneurship, professionalism and partnership in its training programmes and fund-raising activities.

#### **Case 8:**

##### **Stowarzyszenie Viva! Akcja dla zwierząt Viva! Action for Animals – Association**

Organization looking after animals, working for their emancipation and propagating vegetarianism. Sponsored mostly from central in Britain, but lately due to some problems depended on private philanthropy, in search for other sources. Annual budget about 50-100 000 PLN.

#### **Case 9:**

##### **Fundacja Kultury Foundation of Culture**

Foundation working towards promotion and support of Polish artists. They declare that foundation relies mostly on own resources from founding capital. Currently switching to grant system of financing. Thus they also report many external links to financial resources.

#### **Case 10:**

##### **Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Bezpieczeństwa Obywateli “Tarcza” – Association for the Public Security of Citizens “Tarcza ”**

The “Tarcza” Association was founded in 1998 by former policemen and members of their families. Its declared statutory mission has been to act in support for civic initiatives to increase the level of public safety in Poland. The basic strategy has been to facilitate local community co-operation with the police, to educate for public safety, to raise funds and collect material assistance (equipment) to improve the technical capabilities of the local police. The mission, the strategy and the scope (local – nationwide) have remained unchanged since 1998. However, the activities of the Association have stalled recently, which is attributed by its leader to the hostile attitude of the new governing elites towards organizations and people associated with the former (post-communist) governing elites.

Poland’s accession to the European Union has not been perceived as a factor to have had a significant impact on the mission, the strategy or the scope of the activities of “Tarcza”. Accordingly, challenges and opportunities opened up by Poland’s accession to the EU do not seem to play a role in the Association’s strategy at the moment. However, there is an awareness that issues of public safety and security have been gaining in significance both at the local, national, European and international level. Also, the West-elaborated theories and practices of community policing are known to the Tarcza leader.

On the one hand, formally the Association resembles a typical grassroots Polish non-governmental organization: it has few members, none regularly employed staff and little financial or material resources. On the other hand, owing to its mission and strong linkages with governmental and business actors, it has managed to handle the transfer of considerable resources from the private to the public sphere, which makes it – *a rebours* - resemble the infamous Communist and post-Communist *nomenklatura* practices. Overall, the organizational structure of “Tarcza” is far from being transparent, unclear and fluid. The organization seems dominated by a strong leader who relies on his informal external relations more than on co-operation on part of the Association members. Recently there have appeared in a newspaper allegations concerning criminal activities by the Association leader.

## **PART TWO: STRATEGIC AIMS, NETWORKS AND RESOURCES**

### **Case 1:**

#### **Fundacja Instytut Spraw Publicznych – Foundation Institute of Public Affairs**

Often the ISP contacts with strategic sponsors (e.g., Embassy of French Republic, ComputerLand Inc., European Foundation for the Improvement for Living and Working Conditions, Bosch Foundation, European Social Found, Ebert Foundation, Adenauer Foundation, Bathory Foundation, EQUAL, European Commission, National Endowment for Democracy, Open Society Institute, Trust for Civil Society, Polish Telecom) to obtain finances for projects. ISP applies for grants issued by board of given sponsor. Internal departments of the ISP contact with sponsors also for lobbying and for agitation.

They have large amount of contacts with representatives of European Parliament or Commission.

Other NGOs (including international NGOs) are treated as consulting bodies and partners in research projects. Contacts with business companies concern around finances and projects as well.

ISP Foundation contacts with media most intensive on local level, mostly with TVN24 news television. The organization uses the media as an information channel for its resources of knowledge and experiences. Seldom it contacts with foreign media.

Wide range of contacts with local and European scholars and intellectual (most of them established in informal way).

### **Case 2:**

#### **Polska Fundacja im. Roberta Schumana – Polish Foundation of Robert Schuman [PFRS]**

Contacts with national *political parties* are occasional and often take place on an informal basis. Strong communication and collaborative linkages with liberal and democratic national political parties existed before the “mother”-party of PFRS (Unia Wolności/Freedom Union] lost parliamentary elections and entered a phase of a protracted internal crisis. The relations with members of the currently dominating political parties are at best neutral with some symbolic support still offered by particular politicians owing to the old, Solidarity related informal connections, the fact that they used to be member of Unia Wolności and/or due to

symbolic gains flowing from participation in high profile pro-European integration venues staged by the PFRS. Also, an important tacit “participation-encouraging” factor has to be mentioned - some of the former members and employees of the PFRS are now high representatives of the European Commission in Poland.

Contacts with *government* are now rare (see the explanation above) but throughout the 1990s and early 2000s they used to be frequent at the level of ministers, secretaries, directors of governmental bodies and members of the presidential councils. They used to be both formal and informal, direct, intensive, characterised by a mutual interest and support. They were related to common projects and political lobbying but also reliant on the fact that many of the former government officers used to be employees or volunteers working for the PFRS.

Contacts with *regional and local self-government* are fairly regular owing to the fact that publicly staged events as well as the ones held at public schools require both permission and often logistic and organizational support on part of the authorities. Occasionally, the contacts have the form of representatives of the authorities participating in the events organized by the PFRS such as debates and seminars or, much less frequently, in training sessions provided by the PFRS or by a local organization sponsored by the PFRS. In many cases contacts are facilitated or, conversely, blocked by clear political image of the PFRS although the image has recently been much played down.

Regarding *the national Parliament* contacts have been not frequent but regular. Apart from the co-operation of the parliament administration and the majority of parliamentary clubs in annual parliamentary youth training sessions and competitions, the parliament representatives, mainly from the current opposition parties, occasionally accept invitations for debates, seminars and events staged by the PFRS.

Contacts with *other NGOs on the national level* are quite strong but less frequent than in the past. They are mainly related to mutual grant-giving and project collaboration. On the other hand, despite the fact that it belongs to the few most influential oligarch NGO in the country, the PFRS was not involved in activities aiming at building a common representation and lobbying structures for the NGO sector either on the national or European level. Neither was it involved directly in consultation and monitoring of legislative changes that over the recent years have had the biggest impact on the Polish NGO environment.

Contacts with the *European Parliament* have been made on the deputy level and are confined to informal consultations and participation of the EMPs in high profile events staged by the PFRS. The contacts are primarily due to the fact that some of the PFRS founders are currently members of the European Parliament. However, recently, the ever more popular competition organized by the PFRS in which simulations of the European Parliament settings are carried out has attracted as collaborators and experts a few of EMPs of other Polish political options and of foreign origin as well.

Contacts with the *European Commission* are rare. They are limited to rather informal relations with employees in some of the EC directorates who happen to be former employees or volunteers working for the PFRS. Contacts are occasional, direct and informal, carried out on an equal attitude basis. On the other hand, contacts with the representation of the EC in Poland are much more frequent, both formal and informal, related to consultation, grant

giving and symbolic sponsoring (as has already been mentioned, some of the former members and employees of the PFRS are now high representatives of the European Commission in Poland – the fact is not mentioned by the interviewed representative of the Foundation). Similarly, there are dense, collaborative and also both formal and informal linkages with the Centre of European Information (CIE) – the relations are also owing much to the fact that many of the CIE employees used to co-operate with the PFRS earlier as volunteers, employees etc.

Regarding *other NGOs on the international level* contacts exist on presidential, secretarial and level of directors of national foundations, organizations and associations. Grant-giving, symbolic sponsoring, and collaboration at joint projects, such as international exchange of volunteers are the most frequent. Patronage contacts exist as regards NGOs from the East and South of Europe.

Contacts with *NGOs on the EU level* have not been reported.

Contacts with the *business sphere* are frequent and take the form of occasional or regular sponsoring of the events staged by the PFRS.

Contacts with the *media* are claimed as very important and are reported at the level of individual journalists and editors. They result in published contributions, tv or radio coverage. Character of the contacts is direct and usually occasional with the exception of regular high profile and mass events. In the latter case the PFRS has forged regular collaborative relationships with the major public mass media. Attempts to attract the attention of private mass media, foreign and European mass media have been made with some occasional success.

Contacts with the sphere of *culture, science and technology* exist (particular universities, institutes) but are rare and mostly without specific results, apart from the participation of selected academicians and artists in some high profile events staged by the PFRS or more regular projects like the scientific seminars organized for university students.

*Membership* is quite numerous but organized on an informal, loose and fluid basis; employment is also fluid as well as volunteering. However, it is clear that the PFRS has over the years played a role of an incubator for a generation of Europe-oriented Polish young professionals and ascending elites (mostly ascribing to liberal democratic political views).

### **Summarized main findings regarding the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation:**

The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation belongs to the oldest and most influential Polish non-governmental organizations that were founded after the systemic breakthrough. It has been strongly associated with a liberal democratic and pro-European wing on the Polish political scene and this “founding fact” plays a role of a key factor behind the structure, dynamic and productivity of the relationships in which the Foundation has been involved. The political “death” of the founding formation has to a large degree resulted in the narrowing and weakening of the networks in which the Foundation is positioned at the national, regional and local level. On the other hand, the fact that the Foundation has itself “raised” many representatives of the ascending elites results in forging new relationships or sustaining the old ones despite the supposedly hostile political climate. Surprisingly, the fact that its founding fathers, who belong to the legendary first generation of Solidarity politicians, have



been present politically at the European level, appears played down by the current managerial staff of the Foundation.

The national, regional and local networks apparently yield less financial than symbolic resources at the moment. Also, owing to the shifting interests of the foreign (Western European and American donors) the international networks yield less financial resources unless to be spent on the activities in the East and South of Europe. The losses seem to be to an extent compensated for because of the opening up of the European Commission resources. Notably, the Foundation is keen on applying directly to the EC and only rarely takes part in the EU-funded competitions and programmes administered by the Polish government and self-government (e.g. those related to structural funds).

Reported contacts have been established with all but the EU-level NGO categories of social actors. However, the density and strength of the linkages varies between the categories of social actors involved and is clearly liable to “seasonal” political changes when assessed from a long term perspective. Communication has reached top representatives of the respective spheres, for example presidents, ministers, delegates, commissioners, directors, editors and professors but a lot of it has involved just day-to day collaborative and informal contacts between lower rank representatives busy with preparing joint projects.

The main purposes of establishing the linkages include seeking financial support, symbolic sponsoring, project collaboration and publicity. It is evident from the information gathered from the Foundation representative that despite its pro-European profile and strong political anchorage it has only rarely over the last few years been engaged in any kind of strategic lobbying or formal consultation. Rather, it seems to have limited its activities to mass festive events and local training and competition. The European and international linkages are thus treated as potential sources of funding and symbolic sponsoring rather than channels to influence European decision-makers. The moment of Poland’ accession to the EU as well as the political death of the mother-party (not mentioned by the interviewee) seems to constitute two turning points affecting the strategy, resources and networks accessible to the Foundation.

### **Case 3:**

#### **Biuro Obsługi Ruchu Inicjatyw Społecznych “BORIS”**

#### **Office of Services for Social Initiatives „BORIS” and its associated organizations “Mazovia” and “SPLOT”**

Contacts with national *political parties* are not reported. BORIS delegates political lobbying to umbrella-federation bodies to which the Association belongs, i.e. MAZOVIA, WRZOS, SPLOT.

Contacts with *government* are rare. Again, the umbrella-federations are taken to represent BORIS vis-à-vis the governmental bodies. There are two exceptions to the rule: 1) BORIS does take part in competitions for funding announced and administered by governmental agencies and 2) representatives of BORIS are sometimes asked to participate in consultations between non-governmental organizations and governmental agencies – they then act as experts invited by the NGO umbrella-federations. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was indicated as both the dominant target and initiator of the contacts, which is mostly

due to the scope of its interests and competencies – labour market, social affairs and civil society.

Contacts with *regional and local self-government* are regular and most fruitful. They are both formal and informal, in most cases mutually supportive. The contacts concern collaboration on local legislation, funding, introducing novel local labour market and local development policy models, and training. The relationships are both direct and maintained *via* local organizations supported by BORIS. BORIS plays in most cases the role of an expert, institutional innovator and policy entrepreneur during those contacts. The density and effectiveness of the contacts are said to depend both on informal relationships with the representatives of self-government and the dominant political climate. In general, leftist rather than rightist political orientation is more conducive to fruitful co-operation with self-government. However, the general remark concerns the daily and constant necessity of reclaiming spheres of public activity (and influence) by NGOs in their relationships with any type of authorities.

Regarding *the national Parliament* contacts have been very rare and limited to the expert role on behalf of the umbrella-federations.

Contacts with *other NGOs on the national level* are strong (regular, direct, intensive, and supportive). These are visibly two-forked: partnership contacts with the other big NGO players and sponsor contacts with the small NGOs. The partnership relationships are mainly related to mutual project-idea marketing, grant-giving and project collaboration. Occasionally, in formal settings in the role of an invited expert and in informal setting as a member of an old NGO boys' network, the contacts are oriented towards discussing systemic institutional problems encountered by the NGO sector in Poland and elaborating common positions vis-à-vis the governmental bodies. One of the recently discussed issues concerns the administration of the EU structural funds and the access of the NGO sector to competition for the funds, involving also the exact role of the NGO representatives as so called social partners in the new governance settings related to the monitoring of the structural funds. In terms of the sponsorship relations, BORIS is densely interwoven in a network of smaller nationwide and local organizations itself helped to create or develop. In addition, BORIS has been very active in establishing all of the major common representation and lobbying umbrella-federations and networks within the Polish Third sector, including the NGO Brussels representation in the second half of the 1990s.

Contacts with the *European Parliament* have not been reported.

Contacts with the *European Commission* are made only *via* the national governmental and self-governmental bodies and are limited to issues involving the programming, implementation and evaluation of the structural funds. One exception were the EC contacts attempted by the aforementioned Polish NGO Brussels representation. In addition, following the practices of other Polish NGO oligarchs such as the Batory Foundations there are some attempts by the associated organizations of BORIS (SPLOT, MAZOVIA) to enter umbrella and lobbying organizations in Brussels who have a direct access to the EC.

Regarding *other NGOs on the international level* contacts exist on presidential, secretarial and level of directors of national foundations, organizations and associations,

however most of it belongs to pragmatic day-to-day collaboration at joint projects. Grant-giving, seeking project inspiration (so called best practices), symbolic sponsoring, and collaboration at joint projects are the most frequent. Patronage contacts exist as regards NGOs from the East and South of Europe. The contacts are magnified and widened by the initiatives undertaken by SPLOT and MAZOVIA.

Contacts with *NGOs on the EU level* have not been reported with the exception of the contacts with NGO lobbying organizations attempted by the aforementioned Polish NGO Brussels representation and the ones initiated by SPLOT and MAZOVIA.

Contacts with the *business sphere* are not frequent and take the form of occasional training, discussion in the framework of new governance settings related to structural funds or co-sponsoring of the locally implemented projects. Local small business is however targeted in a programme focused on facilitating local pacts.

Contacts with the *media* are claimed as not very important due to the fact that the image and reputation of BORIS is very good and does not need special publicity. In addition, the media are not useful in getting across to the type of addressees BORIS targets itself, i.e. self-government, local NGOs and small businesses. Lastly, BORIS relies on its well developed Internet information and Internet marketing and its own publishing series. However, the media channels are well used by the associated organizations of SPLOT and MAZOVIA.

Contacts with the sphere of *culture, science and technology* are virtually non-existent with the exception of representatives of BORIS who are invited as experts and course trainers to some universities. BORIS is said to be self-reliant in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge it needs to pursue its mission. Also, it is self-reliant in terms of research and analyses. The self-reliance is enhanced by the access to the umbrella-federations and networks and their resources.

*Membership* is small, professional and efficiently organized with clear division of labour and a lot of autonomy in particular “branches” and even as regards single projects. Owing to the employment stability, most of the BORIS managers feel competent and knowledgeable enough to be able to tell the institutional story of the organization – a case which makes BORIS exceptional in comparison to many of the other interviewed NGOs.

### **Summarized main findings regarding BORIS:**

BORIS belongs to the oldest and most influential Polish non-governmental organizations that were founded after the systemic breakthrough. It has been strongly associated with the infrastructural current in the NGO sector. From the beginning it has played a role of a service provider for smaller NGOs, a cradle of NGO professionalism and a sort of an NGO innovation incubator. Apparently, it did not aspire to become the spokesperson of the sector or even the social service part of the sector. It has however pursued a policy of facilitating consolidation and integration of the sector by helping to establish common initiatives, joint representations and sub-sector federations. This policy was mostly done *via* informal contacts with the leaders of the other old NGO school boys’ network. Politically, it has kept a low profile and only spoke in the public as an expert invited by one of the common representative

bodies. Still, it has managed efficiently to introduce in this way many novel ideas concerning the management of NGOs, social policy and new governance. Its targeted sphere of influence is regional and local.

The transnational, international, national and regional networks are treated both as channels of access to potential sources of funding and transmission belts for novel ideas and best practices. Owing to the shifting interests of the foreign (Western European and American donors) the international networks yield now less financial resources unless to be spent on the activities in the East and South of Europe. The losses seem to be to a great extent compensated for because of the opening up of the EU structural funds option. Gaining the status of a regional expert on the structural funds, BORIS has fully taken advantage of this option.

Reported direct contacts have been established with all categories of social actors and the media. The EU-level and other transnational linkages are maintained via the associated organizations, such as SPLOT and MAZOVIA. However, their density and strength is the greatest between BORIS and Polish NGOs and BORIS and local and regional self-government. Communication has reached top representatives of the respective spheres, but is mostly done on a day-to day collaborative and less formal basis with lower rank representatives. Communication is most dense and usually informal with leaders of other big NGOs located in Warsaw (i.e. the aforementioned “NGO old school boys’ network”).

The moment of Poland’ accession to the EU seems to constitute a turning point affecting the strategy, resources and networks accessible to the Association. However, the introduction of the national law on public activity and volunteering is seen as more important from the point of view of aims purported by BORIS and the NGO sector in Poland in general.

**Case 4:**  
**Fundacja “Nasza Ziemia”**  
**Foundation “Our Earth”**

They regularly issue reports and information for parliamentarians and ministries, voivodships and local government. Maintain contacts with them in aim for patronage of their activities and help in organization. Often ask for a stance on particular problems. Some politicians are very interested other express completely lack of it.

They would like but do not know how to maintain contacts with European Parliament and European Commission either. But they monitor webpages for changes of policies and other information. Big barrier for achieving funds from ESF is 10% of own engagement and thus need for bigger coalition of organizations.

Intense cooperation with other native NGOs while realizing projects: synchronization of activities, mutual inspiration, initiative, and planning. Regional and local organizations often used as subcontractors.

Some contacts with other organizations abroad but only from “new” European countries brought by similarity of problems. They maintain together some projects, and training for coordinators.

They try to reach business organizations as partners for ecological maintenance, and cooperation, also some sponsorship. Main goals of that are bringing up awareness and employee education. Similar endeavors apply to Polish branches of global companies.

They maintain very intensive contacts with mass media, through personal connections, stably known journalists. They provide information about current events, problems. Journalists call for help in realizing materials. In case of most spectacular events some contacts with foreign media.

They intent to maintain stable contacts with academics and professionals but usually it is not so often. Mostly they acquire consultations on projects, advises, guiding from institutes, specialist of environment management, energy, recultivation. Sporadically happens contacts with foreign intellectuals during international projects.

They engage artists, voyagers into their activities as support, foreign ones only during international projects.

Inner division of work into projects, management through goals, every week meetings of staff. Every project coordinator is in charge for individual contacts.

#### **Case 5:**

#### **Fundacja Rozwoju Sztuki Filmowej Foundation for Development of Cinematic Art**

Cultural organization organizing festivals, shows, presentations, exhibitions. Financed mostly by municipality of Warsaw, ministry of culture, local governments. Annual budget from 100-500 000 PLN. Four years ago only 10 000 PLN.

Very often they contact with local administration to obtain finances for projects. Usually they apply for grant contests issued by local authorities. Local cultural departments care about events for their communities. Often contacts concern acquiring terrain for outdoor cinema.

They do not have any contacts with representatives of European Parliament or Commission.

Other NGOs are treated as partners in realizing projects, achieving mutual synergy of efforts. They mutually promote each other. No contacts with foreign NGOs.

Contacts with business organizations concern borrowing equipment and sponsoring. Foundation also takes part in organizing business events. Foreign companies only in case of their Polish branches.

Contacts with media most intensive on local level, mostly with press then radio and internet. They seek media patronage and information about activities. No foreign media contacts.

Movie critics, editors of newspapers, movie directors and producers are among not so frequent contacts in aim of support and personal participation in projects. Sometimes foundation organizes meetings with authors. There are no such a contacts with foreign authors.

**Case 6:**  
**Fundacja Kultury Polskiej**  
**– Foundation of Polish Culture**

Contacts with national *political parties* are not reported.

Contacts with *government* are occasional. Representatives of government are asked to symbolically sponsor high profile cultural and arts events staged by the FKP. More regular contacts are reported with the Ministry of Culture, however they are said to be much less frequent and satisfactory under the current conservative government. The contacts have concerned funding, data gathering and cultural policy and national cultural heritage debates. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also been asked to co-operate *via* its diplomatic channels on several occasions when the FKP activity concerned Polish heritage abroad. This channel has, again, been largely inaccessible under the current government. Presidential councils and private foundations established by the former (post-Communist) president and his wife also collaborated with the FKP, mostly by co-funding and symbolic sponsoring of arts events.

Contacts with *regional and local self-government* are quite regular and mostly fruitful, they are related both to formal permissions for staging public events, organisational assistance, co-funding and symbolic sponsoring. The contacts with non-metropolitan authorities are said to be more satisfying since the FKP offer is perceived as most prestigious outside the capital city.

Regarding *the national Parliament* contacts have been occasional and mostly limited to symbolic sponsoring and jointly financed and organised projects carried out abroad which targeted the Polish *diaspora* or aimed at the preservation of the Polish heritage abroad. The contacts have been both formal – via the parliamentary committees and informal as many senators are at the same time celebrities in the sphere of culture and arts and/or members of the FKP.

Contacts with *other NGOs on the national level* are limited. The most probable reason for it is the scarcity of funding dedicated to the NGOs dealing with arts and culture and tough competition for the funds.

Direct contacts with the *European Parliament* have not been reported but some of the few national NGOs which collaborate with the FKP are known to have initiated the contacts and to have taken advantage of them in terms of both direct funding by the EP and gaining access to a European public opinion.

Contacts with the *European Commission* have not been reported.

Regarding *other NGOs on the international level* contacts exist on presidential, secretarial and level of directors of national foundations, organizations and associations. Grant-giving, symbolic sponsoring, and collaboration at joint projects are the most frequent. Contacts are mainly due to informal ties with members and sympathisers of the FKP who live abroad. Patronage contacts exist as regards NGOs from the East of Europe.

Contacts with *NGOs on the EU level* have been reported as initiated but failed because of the lack of resources which would need to be dedicated to the involvement in the transnational NGO structures.

Contacts with the *business sphere* are most frequent and take the form of sponsoring events, projects and competitions. This type of contacts has been indicated as vital to the FKP.

Contacts with the *media* are claimed as very important due to the fact that publicity plays such a great role as regards cultural and arts events. The high profile venues, attended by top celebrities involved in the activities of the FKP attract mass media regularly. The FKP invites the media representatives to all its projects nonetheless. Many of top journalists are members of the FKP as well, which facilitates collaboration with the media.

Contacts with the sphere of *culture, science and technology* are very frequent and seen as vital: the presence of celebrities and best known figures of the three spheres is absolutely necessary for the FKP activities, ranging from being member of the jury during a music competition to fund-raising during a cocktail party.

*Membership* is extensive, more typical of an association than a foundation and involves many celebrities, both from Poland and from abroad. However, the participation of the members in the daily life of the FKP is limited. It is managed by a small, traditionally organized office which is busy with organizational business and setting up fund-raising events, while the honorary council is the main source of ideas for new projects.

### **Summarized main findings regarding Fundacja Kultury Polskiej:**

Fundacja Kultury Polskiej belongs to the oldest Polish non-governmental organizations as it was founded during the last stage of state socialism. It has grown out of an traditional elitist concern for culture and arts and as an act of challenge to the then Polish governments which, according to the members of FKP, largely abandoned the sphere of arts and culture. The situation after the systemic breakthrough has not only not improved but deteriorated by letting the sphere of culture be ruled mostly by the market logic. Hence, the mission of the FKP is seen as going against the grain of the times.

The Foundation plays its role mostly according to an old (pre-war and nineteenth century) script in which the intelligentsia and artists constitute the elite of the nation and are morally responsible for its spiritual condition. In terms of practical activities this script has produced a hybrid pattern of strategies in which symbolic capital at the disposal of the aforementioned elites has to be married/exchanged with economic capital at the disposal of the business. This script and strategy determines the direction and scope of the relationships sought by the FKP. Only marginally there is a budding awareness that other directions (e.g. EU, regional self-government, NGO umbrella-federations) might be more promising in the future, both in terms of resources and influence. However, know how to execute the turn is missing as well as the old script must be perceived as blocking the turn.

The transnational, international, national and regional networks are treated as channels of access to sources of symbolic capital. The sphere of business is perceived as the primary potential source of funding. There is little evidence of attempts to use the networks as transmission belts for more strategic aims, such as policy change.

Reported contacts have been established with all but the EU-level categories of social actors. However, their density and strength is the greatest between the FKP and the spheres of culture and science, the media and, especially with the business sphere. Communication has reached top representatives of the respective spheres and is frequently kept at this level even in day-to-day collaboration but is largely dependent on pre-existing informal linkages.

## Case 7:

### **Katolickie Biuro Informacji i Inicjatyw Europejskich OCIPE**

#### – **Catholic Office for European Information and Initiatives OCIPE**

Contacts with national *political parties* are occasional and usually take place as invitations issued to their leaders to participate in high profile venues to debate the issues of European integration and a Christian/Catholic vision of the united Europe. Such venues and the invitations have been much less frequent after Poland's accession to the EU.

Contacts with *government* are not reported with the exception of reporting on the OCIPE activities to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Administration which is a legal supervisor of this type of organizations in Poland. Apparently, before the accession the contacts involved both invitations to high profile debates such as mentioned above and training sessions offered to and by top public administration officers. Also, the OCIPE applied successfully for pre-accession assistance funds distributed by para-governmental agencies.

Contacts with *regional and local self-government* are not very frequent, they involve mainly co-funding of locally targeted OCIPE projects.

Regarding *the national Parliament* contacts used to be frequent before the accession and took the form of invitations to participate in debates and seminars organized by the OCIPE under the label of visions of European integration. Also, there were contacts related to shared participation in expert committees set up by the Polish bishops with a view to a national strategy of accession.

Contacts with *other NGOs on the national level* are limited to the major "oligarch" NGOs which have a clear pro-European and pro-civic image. They used to involve grant-giving, mutual participation in public debates, but currently they are fewer and mainly related to local project collaboration. OCIPE has not been involved in the processes to create a common representation of the Polish NGO sector or to influence the law regulating their functioning.

Contacts with the *European Parliament* are indirect and made via the "mother" OCIPE office located in Brussels. They have no specific results.

Contacts with the *European Commission* are both indirect as in the case of the European parliament and more direct via participation in competitions for funding obtainable directly from the EC. Also, there are direct contacts with the representation of the European Commission in Poland- these take the form of informal enquiries about funding options and then applications for funding.

Regarding *other NGOs on the international level* contacts exist both on presidential, secretarial and level of directors of national foundations, organizations and associations and on the level of staff but are mostly carried out via the offspring OCIPE offices located abroad. Grant-giving, symbolic sponsoring, and collaboration at joint projects as well as gathering information of recent developments related to European integration, including funding opportunities are the most frequent. North American grants played a significant role at the beginning of the OCIPE existence.

Contacts with *NGOs on the EU level* have not been reported with the exception of lobbying contacts executed by the OCIPE headquarters in Brussels.

Contacts with the *business sphere* are not reported.



Contacts with the *media* are claimed as very important and are reported at the level of major mass media agencies, local media agencies and individual journalists and editors. They usually take the form of training offered by the OCIPE and its twin-organization specifically oriented towards research and training in media issues. Less frequently the contacts involve participation of the OCIPE representatives in media events. Especially highlighted are contacts that results in published contributions, tv or radio coverage concerning the OCIPE disseminated modes of informing the Polish public about the European integration and know how related to the development of local civic Catholic communities.

Contacts with the sphere of *culture, science and technology* exist (particular universities, institutes) but are rare and mostly without specific results, apart from the participation of selected representatives of the spheres in events and training programmes offered by the OCIPE.

*Membership* is limited but supported by the mother milieu of the Jesuits and the Catholic Church. The management is expected to innovate but the employed staff seems to be performing roles typical of hierarchical organizations, ensuring also a sort of an institutional continuity. Professionalism is stressed especially in terms of training offered by the OCIPE.

#### **Summarized main findings regarding the OCIPE:**

The OCIPE in Poland – Katolickie Biuro Informacji i Inicjatyw Europejskich is one of the oldest non-governmental organizations to be focused on the European affairs. Its origins and orientation are specific, i.e. guided by the views and policies of the Catholic Church. The organization played apparently an important role in sensitizing Polish elites to the Catholic Church attitudes and visions of European integration. Throughout the 1990s and until Poland's accession to the EU it was very active in organizing elite debates, seminars and training sessions dedicated to Europe. It had quite dense relations with the political and media spheres. Notably, the activities by the OCIPE had a narrow elitist scope and impact, even within the framework of the Catholic milieu in Poland, being associated with the progressive, liberal wing in the Church. The other – civic – specialization of the OCIPE allowed it to attract fruitful partners among grant-giving NGOs in Poland and abroad as well as resulting in less elitist, local level interventions.

The international, European and national networks are treated as channels of access to financial resources but even more so to the sources of knowledge, know how and influence. Its programmes, including publications rely most on the resources gathered through the Brussels based OCIPE office. Notably, the Polish OCIPE relies now for its daily functioning on endowments from foreign donor organizations and, increasingly, on direct applications to the European Commission.

Reported contacts have been established with all but the self-government and business categories of social actors. However, the density and strength of the linkages varies between the categories of social actors involved and is clearly linked to the dynamics of the European integration processes. After Poland's accession to the EU, the contacts have been to a great extent limited to the local level where general (i.e. transnationally forged) strategy of the OCIPE is implemented via training of local journalists, teachers and priests. Communication used to reach top representatives of the respective spheres, for example presidents, ministers,

delegates, commissionaires, directors, editors and professors but now its is conducted primarily on a day-to-day basis with lower rank partners in the country. Communication with the mother milieu involves all levels.

#### **Case 8:**

##### **Stowarzyszenie Viva! Akcja dla zwierząt Viva! Action for Animals - Association**

Organization looking after animals, working for their emancipation and propagating vegetarianism. Sponsored mostly from central in Britain, but lately due to some problems depended on private philanthropy, in search for other sources. Annual budget about 50-100 000 PLN.

Most often they work with municipal plenipotentiary of animals affairs and department of environment. They established some links to parliament, try to influence legislative projects, lobby. Count for 5 sympathizers among parliamentarians. It is hard for them to evaluate if regulations on animals protection are influenced by them or rather it is effect of adjustment to EU legal framework.

Rarely contacts with Polish EU parliamentarians, only two of them show any interest.

Very rare initiatives towards EC – e-mails, faxes about projects.

Association has intense contacts with other organizations from Warsaw working on animals protection. With Empathy Foundation organize every year a Week of Vegetarianism. They most often engage in mutual help in publicizing events or problems, to access the media. They often have common projects like lately printing calendar. Sometimes feel concurrence in achieving grants, efforts for media existence or image.

On EU level they feel growing opportunities and started to participate in eurogroup for lobbying possibilities. Although they can afford only for passive membership because fee is much too big for them. Most often they can provide informational campaigns in Polish media and parliament.

Viva! obtains some financial support from private businesses that sympathize with them. No contacts with foreign entrepreneurships.

Contacts with media are the very basis of their activities. All their activities are directed towards media. They found that internet is much more efficient than newspapers, not mentioning TV. Performings, happenings, PR activities to spread their mission. Established good often private contacts with journalists, who call sometimes and ask for theme.

Occasionally Reuters or BBC happen to get interested with some events.

Frequent contacts with authorities, celebrities for participation in letters and appeals. Often specialist doctors as experts, only Polish, no foreign contacts.

#### **Case 9:**

##### **Fundacja Kultury Foundation of Culture**

Foundation working towards promotion and support of Polish artists. They declare that foundation relies mostly on own resources from founding capital. Currently switching to grant system of financing. Thus they also report many external links to financial resources.

Very good contacts with appropriate ministries and Prime Minister Office and President Office. Primarily those contacts are concerning financial support and promotion of activities of foundation. Sometimes foundation provides expertise.

They do not have any contacts with European Parliament. Rare contacts with Polish mission of European Commission for financial support of realized projects.

Strong cooperation with other NGOs towards realizations of projects. Mutual support and expertise.

Currently some contacts with Dante Alighieri Association from Italy towards realization of foreign projects and help with projects in Poland.

Often they achieve sponsorship from biggest Polish companies and one foreign – Yona Group.

Frequent contacts with press, less frequent with TV about information on projects, activities. Obtain some interests from Scottish and Austrian press connected to Edinburgh festival, Polish artists in Scotland and Austria.

Very frequent contacts with all known Polish artists and scientists during realization of cultural, artistic, scientific projects. Also many contacts with foreign artists.

#### **Case 10:**

##### **Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Bezpieczeństwa Obywateli “Tarcza” – Association for the Public Security of Citizens “Tarcza ”**

Contacts with national *political parties* are not reported despite the rather clearly stated political sympathies of the Association, i.e. left and post-Communist.

Contacts with *government* are now non-existent and reportedly there is a hostile climate in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Administration and the Police Headquarters under the current government. Those institutions together with the Ministry of Education used to be main governmental partners of the Tarcza. The contacts used to involve both symbolic sponsoring and co-funding of projects implemented by the Association. councils. They used to be both formal and informal, direct, intensive, characterised by a mutual interest and support. They were related to common projects and political lobbying but also reliant on the fact that many of the former government officers used to be employees or volunteers working. The contacts in the police milieu used to be built upon informal linkages.

Contacts with *regional and local self-government* are fairly regular owing to the fact that most activities undertaken by the Tarcza Association targeted public safety and security at the local level. The contacts have involved participation of the authorities in events such as competitions and training sessions as well as playing the role of an intermediary in the transfer of material resources (such as cars) to the local police stations. The contacts are said to have been disturbed under the currently dominating conservative political option.

Regarding *the national Parliament* contacts have not been reported.

Contacts with *other NGOs on the national level* are very limited and involve collaboration on joint projects with just a few regular partners, such as the twin organization of police families, police trade unions and the post-Communist teachers’ trade union (ZNP).

Contacts with the *European Parliament* have been reported.

Contacts with the *European Commission* have been reported although the existence of the opportunities has been acknowledged.

Regarding *other NGOs on the international level* contacts are non-existent.

Contacts with *NGOs on the EU level* have not been reported.

Contacts with the *business sphere* are frequent and take the form of occasional or regular sponsoring of the projects carried out by the Tarcza, events staged by the Association and – most notably – the transfer of material resources (cars, computers etc.) to be donated to the police forces at the national and local level.

Contacts with the *media* are claimed as important but in reality are infrequent and recently – because of some criminal allegations – hostile.

Contacts with the sphere of *culture, science and technology* have not been reported with the exception of business firms dealing in new technologies which are approached as potential donors.

*Membership* is limited and loosely organized. There are no regular employees or volunteers. Apparently, informal personal linkages and the social capital of the leader of Tarcza are decisive for the functioning of the organization.

### **Summarized main findings regarding the Stowarzyszenie “Tarcza”:**

Stowarzyszenie “Tarcza” was created in mid-1990s by people related to the then dominating post-Communist political elites and active within a rather specific milieu of police employees and their families. Its aims were general (public security and safety), its activities nation-wide and local, supported by a network of organizations and institutions clearly linked by common political sympathies and interests. While the informative and educational types of activities have been quite transparent, the dominant activities carried out at the verge of business, governmental and self-governmental fields have been quite opaque and the supposed and actually resulting transfers of significant resources between the spheres with the penniless Tarcza as the main intermediary might raise and did some questions in the media and the governmental bodies under the new political elite.

The national and local networks apparently yielded both financial and non-financial resources. Both the sphere of government, self-government and business was targeted. Linkages with the milieu of other NGOs were not sought. Neither were looked for contacts with international or transnational actors. The reported contacts have been clearly liable to “seasonal” political changes. Communication has reached top representatives of the respective spheres, for example presidents, ministers, directors and managers.

## **PART THREE: SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA**

### **Summary of the main findings regarding NGO relations with particular categories of social actors**

#### *1) National political parties (NPP)*

Most of the studied NGOs have rather irregular and weak relations with NPP. Some of them were, however, founded under the auspices of specific political parties and this fact has had a great impact on their overall image, access to social networks and resources. In all cases, the relationships involve more frequently symbolic resources and informal influence

and/or access to know-how. However, it might be claimed that the direct and formal linkages are not particularly sought by the NGO leadership with this category of the social actor owing to the generally poor image of the political parties in Poland and the much publicised ideal of the Polish nongovernmental organizations as apolitical bodies.

#### *2) The Government*

Relatively to the level and scope of functioning relations with government are for many organizations quite frequent and important. Government and its agencies are perceived as sources of funding, of rules defining the functioning of the NGOs, of channels to influence national and transnational decision-making and, lastly, as partners to build civil society in the country. Clearly, some of the government divisions are more open and willing to co-operate with the NGO sector than others, also in relation to specialization as in case of ecological or cultural NGOs. Typically, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs apart from the Office for European Integration were indicated as both granting access of NGOs and inviting them to take advantage of it. The actual mode of interaction depends to a large degree on the prevailing political option, personality of the governmental officer in charge and informal linkages.

#### *3) Self-government*

Relations between NGOs and self-government are deemed to be very important in most cases. This is due to legal competencies of the self-governmental authorities, resources that they may grant to NGOs and, most importantly, to the overlapping spheres of interest which are related to local community development and the provision of social services. The relations are much dependent on informal linkages and the degree of expertise and innovativeness on part of the NGOs. In many cases the relations involve active stance on part of the NGOs and a determination in negotiating the rules of the game, which are not too precisely defined by the overall legislative framework.

#### *4) Parliament*

In most cases relations with national parliament are not present, except semi-lobbying activities of some active politically organizations. NGO lobbying were more intensive before accession to EU. Some specialized NGOs are active on this regard as in case of ecological organizations. Semi-lobbying activities include for example informational campaigns and training courses.

#### *5) NGOs on the national level*

Active relationship among NGOs during realization of projects are inevitable. Relations of mutual cooperation, subcontracting, and contracting out of some elements of projects are common and very complex. They compose complicated and overlapping networks of formal and informal connections. Although it was noticed that among NGOs one can observe competition for obtaining grants.

#### *6) European Parliament*

Connections to EMPs are usually not present although there were reported some informal, based on former acquaintance.

#### *7) European Commission*

Contacts with institutions of EC apply only to organizations that are concentrated on activities on EU level. In such a cases they can be more intensive than those with local government.

#### *8) NGOs on the international level*

International cooperation with other NGOs is concentrated in East and South-East Europe as regions of operational engagement of Polish NGOs demanding cooperation with local NGOs.

*9) NGOs on the EU level*

Cooperation with other NGOs on EU level is weak and restricted due to financial requirements of participation in European coalitions..

*10) business sphere*

Linkages to business sphere vary and could be described as average. In most cases they relate to sponsorship of events. Most vital in case of cultural NGOs, more modest in other cases. There are however NGOs for which philanthropy is not essential. There are also reported informational campaigns and training courses targeted at private sector.

*11) media*

For most NGOs contacts with media are frequent, especially with press. Such links are treated as important and considered on regular basis. Much less intense in cases of foreign media, usually during realizations of big media attractive events.

*12) culture, science and technology*

Frequent contacts depending on organizational profile. Often depending on composition of the board, which usually consist of acknowledged persons.

*13) Membership*

Members have usually loose contact with mother organization, while most intense work lay on the side of few activists or founders in form of employment. It is usually not important source of finances.

### **Tentative conclusions and auxiliary hypotheses**

A preliminary propositions based on conducted sample research can be provided with an aid from previous research experience. Because of sample size based on just thirteen cases it is possible to give some general directions of more comprehensive research but conclusions are not binding, giving rather suggestions of further conceptualizations.

Initial hypothesis of survey was growing elitism of nongovernmental leadership, that is basically assumption that at the beginning nongovernmental organizations were not elitist and secondly that now they are becoming. The first issue is possible to verify mainly from autobiographic narrations of interviewed. But there is also historical evidence on more general level within legal framework. In case of Poland it shows that regulations allowing establishment of foundations date back to 1984, while those applying to associations were introduced in 1989 and by that time there were already more than hundred foundations that has started their activities.

It may be seen that from the beginning Polish nongovernmental sector were relatively elitist and professional with few foundations as model examples. After change of political system rapid and enthusiastic grow of nongovernmental sector were occupied by high rates of institutional mortality. Especially critical was period of EU access negotiations when shortages of finances in NGO sector caused a sharp crisis within. We may say that less professional diminished. For most NGOs crucial were well established connections with other organizations from sector and local administration. A current state of affairs thus expresses already quite professional and elitist status of NGOs from biographical perspective of their activities. Instead of determining development of professionalization in nongovernmental

sector, it could be more suitable to evaluate if NGOs fulfill professional standards comparing to business or administrative institutional environment.

Although attention of researchers is usually attracted by most visible and met with media coverage factors, that is political activities and lobbying, most of work that NGOs conduct is nested in service providing with close cooperation with local authorities. Ordinary operations within nongovernmental sector concern realization of designed projects financed mainly by local administration. Professionalism is inducted by grant applying regime and competition among NGOs.

Here at stake is second hypothesis, that NGOs are concerned by EU level institutional cooperation. While most of NGOs are occupied by mundane operations on local level they do not perceive necessity to undertake efforts to engage in international activities. Their activities don't deserve scaling up and cooperation on EU level. Thus we may categorize NGOs into plethora of those which operate only on local level, some of those which have more national character and only bunch of those that specialize in international cooperation. Instead of verifying very general hypothesis if NGOs treat participation on EU level as inevitable, there could be considered more precise segmentation of nongovernmental sector ranging from local to international scope of their endeavors and operational involvement.

Third hypothesis, that NGOs are blocked in their attempts to join the transnational/European networks by the existence of gatekeepers located at the national level, in case of Poland is difficult to uphold. It could be more accurate to claim that most NGOs develop their performance on local level and are not interested in close cooperation with European partners. On the other hand, those NGOs which specialize in undertakings within European framework in very professional way handle their affairs and have extended personal contacts on EU level. If there were any gate-keepers, the engaged on that level NGOs would have developed ways of bypassing them. In fact they do it efficiently acquiring access to European resources in straight way, without mediations of national level elites, especially politicians.

Problematic here is issue of specific know-how that EU-oriented NGOs possess, that is knowledge of possible resources available for their activities. It seems that they are familiar with procedures, know where to look for and how to apply for opportunities at European level. Puzzling issue connected with that state is that they do not pass their knowledge to other NGOs and keep it only for themselves. In that case we can speak about real elites of nongovernmental sector with oligarchic inclinations and that they themselves fulfill the role of gate-keepers to EU level.

One of the most elementary failing of the NGO research is its assumption that NGOs possess a specific value base that impels them to act on 'altruistic' motives. That utterly opposes one of the basic tenets of organizational analysis, that organizational survival is every organization's goal and that, to survive, an organization must find resources for its functioning and compete for them with similar organizations. As the fable is propagated that NGOs are somehow institutionally exceptional and operate on a values, than on organizational operatives, the true complexity of NGO sector with respect to acquiring resources is deformed.

From historical perspective, unpredictable spread of nongovernmental organizations in the second half of twentieth century was caused by restructurization of systems of welfare state in OECD countries due to economic crises of 1975. Welfare systems responded in selective dismantling (reductions and cutbacks), internal transformation (namely decentralization) and

intensified externalization (i.e. contracting out, subcontracting, and outsourcing). This last factor was extremely important to explosion of nongovernmental organizations providing services for state (as “subsidiary bodies” in NGO rhetoric). It is 1980s when we first could observe a boom in third sector supported by state administration restructurization and new modes of provision. Rapid growth of nongovernmental sector in the eighties were backed by the state by contracting-out and outsourcing policy of welfare state bastions in public administration. After fall of cold war system in 1989 this phenomenon were globalized, specifically disseminated to poorer countries through policy of structural adjustment.

Up from 1970s, a growing number of higher education graduates exceeded systemic demand for them and employment opportunities in state administration, which begun to shrink due to economic crisis. Human resources within nongovernmental sector were initially derived from public sector. From the very beginnings it was public administration that served as reserve of people participating in development of the third sector. Employees of the public sector were moving to nongovernmental sector and soon flow of human resources between the sectors started to be a constant factor. From position in local administration to establishment of association and then back to public office the movements of people are frequent and dynamic. Often a person holding position within public administration is simultaneously in board of foundation. Such a situation stimulates contacts between public and nongovernmental sectors on personal and institutional levels.

When we take a look at third sector in Poland it is mainly depended on public finances and concerned with diversified array of public services that traditionally used to be a domain of the state. Therefore close collaboration of NGOs with public administration mostly on local level is inevitable. Here we can speak about elitism of nongovernmental activists while professionalization of their services is fundamental condition of their institutional subsistence.

Paradoxical in such a panorama is fact that most of money available to third sector comes from European Social Found and sectoral operations – although channeled through public administration agencies.

Consequently it could be said that it is policy of European Union to manage operations of nongovernmental organization in cooperation with public administration in Poland. Hence it is difficult to treat Polish administration as gate-keepers for nongovernmental sector. Rather they carry out negotiated with European Commission policies toward and through nongovernmental organizations.

On the other hand there are mechanisms of direct access to European policy making through nongovernmental federations and networks. Nevertheless participation in such organisms is restricted through financial barrier, namely fee. Because of budget limitations Polish NGOs usually can afford only for passive membership that does not deserve excessive expenditures. Again it could be said that it is policy on European level that restricts access to its resources.

During conducted interviews there were no voices accusing Polish political elites of rationing access to European institutions. Rather underlined was cooperation with public administration and bias toward handling operational issues with participation of local governments. On that regard European Union is not perceived as partner but rather distant and absent on local level. Therefore in case of Poland it could be claimed that European Union restricts and regulates access to its resources, playing role of its own gate-keeper.



## Methodological note

### *1) The starting point: the methodology and the questionnaires returned*

The CONNEX' Research Group no. 5 carried out a study of the interactions between NGO leaders, policy and decision makers acting in Third Sector and politicians (from local-national and EU levels of governmental/power structure). The NGO leaders and organizational staff will be the future most influential group of actors who are supposed to be open to form new developments and innovative procedures of [self]governance in EU.

The research group investigated the attitudes, knowledge and modes of contacts of this important group of actors in respect to position and role of political elites in the process of resources-related exchange between non-governmental and political power sectors. With Slovenian research team we developed a questionnaire focusing on the accessibility of given elite, its importance and its modes of being in the exchange of vital resources.

Within the given time and cost constraints it was not possible to distribute the questionnaire in the methodologically most desirable way. The questionnaires were distributed via contacts established at non-governmental organizations in Poland (especially the largest, well known, and the most influential in Warsaw area). The same research procedure was accomplished in Slovenia. Thus selective samples were obtained, from which the results may be representative for the respective type of organizations or for the researched region but may neither be generalized to all cases of NGOs in Europe nor to the NGO sector in a particular country. Both of the samples (from Poland and Slovenia) have to be considered as selected case studies which have been compared and analyzed for indications of possible similarities and differences. This approach of developing comparative case studies is often used when a random sample is either not possible or not advisable and when the emphasis is on gaining insight rather than achieving representativeness.

To make the comparison as straightforward as possible, we looked for a degree of homogeneity as regards certain relevant problems. The common features of all the case studies are the same categories of elites potentially engaged in contacts (e.g., important people from politics, business, culture, science, the media and other leaders and members of NGOs as well) and the fact that research subjects were still attending given area of civil society. The semi-independent variables used to explain differences found between the case studies were:

- (1) the elite group, that has a contacts with given NGO,
- (2) the branch or type of activity of researched organization,
- (3) the age of organization and
- (4) the importance of the organization in the NGO sector.

The semi-dependent variables taken into analyzes were following:

- (1) position (function) of people with whom organization and/or leader had contacts;
- (2) the main characteristics of these contacts;
- (3) concrete results of these contacts;
- (4) prevailing mode, intensiveness and nature of contacts.

Nevertheless the cases actually showed a remarkable similarity as regards the answers given to the basic questions on position of and attitude to NGOs in the process of interaction with elites. Since participation within the research was satisfying we may conclude that the

results do tell us something about interviewed organizations as representatives of their NGO type and to a certain degree of the region the organization came from.

## *2) The way of the research*

The aim of the study was to point to certain modes of interaction of NGOs and elites of power (without determining their distribution) and to verify the main hypothesis, that political elite is a gatekeeper for NGO sector on the EU level of organizational activities. Our studies can be placed in so-called ‘understanding’ (the Weberian) stream of social research. In other words we were interested in detection first of all how the researched subjects understand their own behaviors and status in interaction and then how that behaviors and status were understood by researchers. Thus research methods applied belong to qualitative analyzes of social phenomena.

Basic research unit was the organization (a foundation or an association) and its style of interaction with elites in resources-related exchange – although attention was also devoted to differentiation of types of interactions among its members. The Polish part of research included 11 organizations (4 associations, 7 foundations) placed in Warsaw Autonomic District. The fieldwork was started at the end of February 2007 and finished at June the same year. With each organization researcher has a contact at least two times. On the basis of earlier directives objective data were collected (e.g., information about financial structure of incomes and outcomes, legal legitimacy of activities, formal objectives and realized projects, number of members, etc.). The researchers were left much freedom in their way of determining the organizations’ modes of interaction with selected type of elites. In some cases persons interviewed were expected to describe their style of contact with elites from the perspective of an external observer as well as to interpret their role, commodities and opportunities of actions in this relationship. The gatekeeping role of elites were not directly investigated (researcher did not directly ask informers about their impressions in the case). At the final stage of analyzes the researchers discussed both case studies of organization-elite interaction mode and their belonging to given type of relationship. In this way was fulfilled idea of ‘collective researcher’ composed of people taking part in all steps of the project built their conclusions on documented results and experiences from contact with researched leaders and members of NGOs.

The research technique applied in data collecting process was questionnaire translated from English into Polish and distributed via email or personal contacts. In the Polish part of the project the questionnaire was called ‘inventory’, because of its hybrid form (formal social survey questionnaire/mail inquiry).

In certain situations researcher was obliged to change the basic research technique into deeper interview with intermediate degree of standardization. It means, that the questionnaire was the base for the research conversation organized around given set of questions. The situations mention above depended on informers’ positive or negative attitudes towards researcher or research contact. If the investigated people’s attitude tended to strongly positive, researchers could predict that questionnaires would be returned. The strong positive attitude means that the respondent is disposed to answer the questions from the questionnaire and to set them into rubrics in proper order of the form. Face-to-face interview as a result of respondents’ negative attitude was a conditional reward for researcher who did not stop to agitate for research contact.

The Polish questionnaire included 15 problems covering a total of 66 questions variables, of which 48 can be directly compared with variables/questions from the Slovenian version of inquiry. A total of 15 questionnaires were distributed, 2 are in course of execution, 5 questionnaires were returned and 6 were transformed into deeper interviews, 2 did not return. All the questionnaires returned and transformed were evaluated in the same analytical method (understanding interpretation).

The questionnaires were filled out during the two quarters of 2007 in the headquarters of researched organizations and under as well as (in selected cases) without the researcher's supervision. The results received and the comments from the informers indicate that the questions were understood correctly with only some minor exceptions, for which were made additional evaluation. Only the small group of the respondents enjoyed filling out the questionnaire as expressed in their comments. The respondents' comments and remarks varied from positive to negative. The negative comments covered opinions on form of the questions included in inquiry – especially the variation of the same form of question were percept by informers as much boring and took them as much time as it looks at first sight.

It is very important to keep in mind, that neither the general trends determined in the research can be generalized to the NGO sector of new EU members nor the national trends to the sector of any researched country. This study must be interpreted as an explorative study (e.g., pilot study) only.

### *3) Advantages and disadvantages of the research curriculum – an evaluation of the project*

Besides of properties of unique key-problem of the project, the research has two fundamental advantages.

The first, and main one is its flexible structure of analyzes regarding 'understanding' interpretation of the social actions/behaviors. The project started with given area of problems (e.g., gatekeeping role of political elites in the process of decision making in sector-framework of governance on the EU level) and research interests and then it gave researchers wide range of opportunities to perform a theory explained how local/domestic elites can affect the actions of NGOs on EU stage.

The second one is its case-oriented point of view. In this point of view the core question and research interest is focused on and referred to one organization that may or may not functioning well as a partner of interaction. It follows, then, that researchers' attention is concentrated around typical regularities observed in given sample of cases. It also means, that the aim of the investigation is to look for homogeneities of NGOs/elites contacts in heterogeneous set of interactions as well as research subjects.

In order to weak points (disadvantages) of the project, we should stress, that the detrimental limitation in whole research curriculum was selection of research subjects (the sampling method) on the local and international level. Despite the lack of given sampling criteria, researchers arbitrary qualified non-governmental organizations as an oligarchic-organizations (the most influential on NGO sector), the second-league-organizations and micro-organizations without any specific meaning for wide range of NGO subjects. Moreover, the size of sample was not determined and realized in methodologically appropriate way. Thus explanatory generalization as an extrapolation of direct results of the

research could not be related to broader population. The final results should be seen as conditionally-true causal-hypothesis only.

The core assumption of the research, that the channels linking national political and civil society arenas and the multi-level decision-making process at the EU level are mediated and, to some extent, also controlled by the domestic political (party) elite – could be a source of potential limitations. This assumption is determining the straight way of thinking about NGO-political elite relationship. Silently we made up exception that the only influential on NGO sector and civil society is the first of all political elite. Following that, we are using the notion of mediation and in respect to that the notion of control, but in fact, both notions should be used separately in the context of diverse prerequisites of mediation and control.

From analytical point of view we should enter into analyses broader category of NGO-oligarchy that may or may not affect on functioning lower-stage organizations and may or may not be a gatekeeper for such small organizations. We should also indicate in more specific way what stage of decision making area is the most important in order to final generalization. In the case of currently presented research it was not clarified. It is important to keep in mind that each area of the decision making process has different types of needs and different ways of action.

From above assumption we also can clearly indicate another disadvantage of the research which is concerned with one-sided course of collecting data. It means, that the current data collecting process is referring to one partner of interaction only. For more true data set the research should be realized with the second partner of interaction, namely the elite of politics/power-related authorities. Thus the partial as well as final results of both sides of interaction should be cross-cut.

In the case of trans-national research is very important to detect contextual circumstances that can influence on the researched phenomena. The presented research omitted the contextual data (e.g., differences in legal system in Slovenia and Poland, current political situation in both countries, the tradition of voluntary engagement, historically determined culture of organization, and citizens' attitudes towards social capital as well as social trust etc.). The contextual data play important role in evaluation of final generalization and they can uprose the level of comparability of the research findings. Indeed collecting of contextual data is very difficult because of the diversity and incompatibility of data resources in different countries.

It is suggested that above presented problems could be avoided by entering more advanced methodological discussion on implementation of the complementary explorative-and-explanatory research. Presented research realized the idea of the sociological description only.

# The Impact of Civil Society Organisations and their Leaders on Decision-making Processes

Igor Bahovec

## I. Introduction

There are many signs that the role of the civil sphere in public and political life has been growing in the last few years. One could start with the attitudes of leading European politicians like Romano Prodi or Tony Blair who have both stressed the need to intensify civil society's inclusion in public and political life. The past President of the European Commission said: 'It is time to realise that Europe is not just run by European institutions but by national, regional and local authorities too – and by civil society' (CNVOS – Social Platform: Exploring the role of Slovenian civil society and its participation in EU NGO networks. 2006: 2).

Here we mention three of the many signs of the revitalisation of the public importance of civil society: (1) increasing governmental attention to the civil sphere in many European states with different political traditions and varying – conservative, socialist, liberal – orientations; (2) the greater self-awareness of civil society entities about their meaning in political life and about their public role; (3) the many researches and published scholarly works about civil society in contemporary democratic society. There is a wide consensus that the successful development of contemporary democratic societies not only depends on good government (state) and a free market but also on a 'healthy' civil sphere.

There are two aspects of the civil sphere we would like to stress. First, because the importance of communication processes between different social spheres, between different institutions, groups and organisations, the role of the people who undertake communication should be seen as an integral part of civil society's impact on social and political life – usually these are the leaders or elites of civil society organisations (CSOs).

Second, although there is much evidence of a positive impact of civil society on different social and political issues and processes,<sup>1</sup> there is no doubt about possible and factual undemocratic tendencies of certain civil society players and actions. What can be said about the characteristics of 'positive civil society' and about 'negative civil society'? According to several researches and theoretical perspectives (for example Etzioni, 1995; Bellah et al., 1996; Berger et al., 1996; Berger, 1997; Higley et al., 1998; Berger and Luckmann, 1999;

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<sup>1</sup> According to huge amount of literature, which is based on empirical researches and theoretical reflections, civil sector and civic culture are very important for development of democracy, for better economic development, for maintaining of cultural substance needed for genuine democracy.

Adam, 2007), key essential differences between civil actions with positive and negative impacts on the public/common good can be found in the following elements:

(1) In the elites (leaders) of civil society organisations/associations (CSOs), their linkages (networks) with the elites of other sectors and other CSOs, and of their culture.<sup>2</sup>

(2) In the nature of relationships between civil society organisations and the key holders of socio-political authority and power. We presume that beside, political elites business, media, academic and cultural elites are also important.

(3) In the cultural orientation of CSOs, that is the meanings, norms and values that guide CSOs in their activities and how they realise them.

In some situations one of these elements is decisive, while in others two or all three elements are critical.

The focus of our research was limited to the links between CSO elites and political and other society elites (including other CSO elites). Nevertheless, it is necessary to know the social context in which elite networks exist so in the paper we first focus on the question of why the civil sphere is important for contemporary genuine democracy and which processes are needed for this.

The purpose of the research was to find out the intensity, nature and ways of CSO elites' linkages with political elites at the national (political parties, national parliament, government), international and EU levels (EU parliament, EU Commission), with other CSO elites (national and international) and with business, mass media, cultural and scientific elites. For this purpose, we prepared a questionnaire which partly includes standard survey questions and partly open questions. We obtained answers from 12 relevant Slovenian CSOs that have linkages with the EU level. In addition, we undertook a deep semi-structured interview with two leaders of a national civil society network organisation in Slovenia (Centre for Informing, Co-operation and Development Nongovernmental Organisations (Slovenia)) and a telephone discussion with a leading person on the parliamentary Board for European Affairs.

Our working hypotheses are:

(1) We suppose some differences exists between the different CSOs. We will analyse differences between Putnam and Olson groups, between CSOs that rely on the voluntary work of their members and CSOs which operate without volunteer work, between CSOs that promote the public interest and CSOs which promote their own narrow interests.

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<sup>2</sup> According to researches in USA (Bellah 1996) elites in USA have very different level of civic culture than in the past. There are two 'elites', establishment and oligarchy. Elite with values typical of establishment behave generously and has (strong) awareness of civic responsibility to the other parts of society – and behave according to these responsibilities. Oligarchic elites do not have any responsibility for other parts of society. According to Bellah the share of oligarchic elite is increasing the share of establishment decreasing.

(2) We suppose that CSOs do not make the same efforts to build contacts with all the segments we asked about (political parties, parliament, government, business, mass media etc.). We suppose the political segment is more important than the other ones.

## **2. Civil society and decision-making processes at the national and European levels**

There is a long tradition of civil society being an integral part of social life in democratic countries. Nevertheless, in the past its voice was only occasionally accepted as being important for decisions at the state (or international) level of society. Unlike social dialogue with a long tradition at the national level, civic dialogue has only very recently been starting to become an integral part of state legal systems.

Since the mid-1990s many European countries have accepted (or are going to accept) a new legal solution for the systematic inclusion of civil society in decision-making processes. For example, Great Britain is a country with a strong civic tradition but the government legalised civil dialogue only very recently by accepting 'Compact', an agreement on civil dialogue in 1998. This was in fact the very first integral act about civil dialogue in Europe.

The situation at the European level is very similar. Only in the last ten years has civil society started becoming a recognised partner in decision-making processes. For example, the *White Book on European Governance*, accepted by the European Commission in 2001, stressed the importance of civil society organisations in the processes of preparing and accepting EU politics as an integral part of 'good governance'. (Comp. *Nevladne organizacije – akter pri oblikovanju politik?*: 15-17). A similar understanding of civil society can be found in some other papers of the EU Commission and in the proposed European Constitution. Of course, such an understanding of civil dialogue is the result of some previous discussions and papers, yet most of these emerged in the last years of the 1990s.

In Slovenia the situation is changing in a similar way, although the process of introducing legalisation on civic dialogue has still not finished. Many facts indicate that very recently government bodies and the parliament have been open to communication with civil society organisations. For example, CSOs are frequently invited to open sessions of different parliamentary boards.<sup>3</sup> Many civil society actors were quite surprised by this openness because some civil society organisations had stressed their voices were not being heard as strongly as they wanted and also because their civil dialogue has not yet been legalised (comp. *Nevladne organizacije – akter pri oblikovanju politik?*, 2005). Of course, one should not forget that it is difficult, often even impossible, to represent civil society as a whole because of the differences between civil society organisations.

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<sup>3</sup> We found this attitude in interview with CSO leaders and in communication with parliament authorities.

We can conclude that civil dialogue is recognised as an integral part of contemporary democratic life in Europe. But why has this happened only recently – and not sooner?

One possible answer is that society is in the process of a new understanding of democratic life. A clear example of such a transformation is the New Labour Party in Great Britain. For Tony Blair and Britain's New Labour Party civil society is one of the most important actors for maintaining and reviving democratic values and democratic development. 'The belief that State could and should substitute civil society and so increase freedom is a huge error of fundamentalist Left' (Blair, 2000: 29, 43). Same can be said about that civil society must be subordinated by State. In the past civil society was either relatively unimportant for political parties and government or was subordinated by the political state for example in the form of civil society organisations dominated by political parties (or in communist countries by the Party). Tony Blair, Anthony Giddens and other leaders of the third way reject such a relationship between politics and understand civil society in its autonomy as a third pillar of democratic society. A very similar perspective was presented by contemporary communitarian authors (Amitai Etzioni, 1995; Robert Bellah, 1996; Philip Selznick, 1992; etc.) and the mediating structures perspective (presented by sociologist and political conservative P. Berger already in the 1970s; see Berger et al., 1996): genuine civil society has a value in its own right, a value which is essential for democracy.

Three things seem to be essential in this regard:

(1) Civil society and state government are being called on to find various ways of arranging a partnership.

(2) Self-organised civil society is able to find solutions to its many needs on the intermediary social level (local, specific groups, social needs etc.) which the state cannot (any more) cover or where the costs of state-based solutions are much higher. This role of civil society may be understood by the principle of subsidiarity (comp. Waschkuhn, 1995; Bahovec, 2005).

(3) Civil society organisations also need to be seen in the role of intermediary institutions (mediating structures). True intermediary institutions mediate between individuals in their small life-worlds and social macro structures (the state, the EU, big business) – mediation should flow in both directions from the individual to the macro institution and from the macro institution to the individual.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> According to Berger and Luckmann (1999) and Luckmann (1996) true intermediary institutions are those institutions which mediate in two directions: from individuals in their small life-worlds to macro institutions (state, big business) and in opposite direction. Real intermediary institutions mediate individual (and group) values from private sphere to different segments of public sphere. Institutions where individual play only a passive role of object of their symbolic service or individuals have to accept (not freely!) superior forms of meaning are not real intermediary institutions. Intermediary institutions give benefits to individual and macro institutions: individuals actively participate in public life, macro institutions stay connected with values which lead ordinary people. With other words: Luckmann stress that intermediary institutions need to be supported



To realise these goals civil society organisations first need to be internally developed and interconnected (CSO networking). Second, the communication of CSO elites with political, business, media, academic and cultural leaders should be developed to ensure greater social and political participation as well as the civil dialogue mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Yet, although one can find relevant literature about the role of elites in Western democracy (comp. Etzioni-Halevy, 1993) and in the ex-communist part of Europe (Higley et al., 1998; Higley and Lengyel, 2000), the elites of civil society are very rarely mentioned in such literature. On the other hand, we can presume that for civil dialogue (that is, for active participation in decision-making processes) the communication of CSOs' elites with government authorities (elites and subelites) is essential.

### **3. Civil organisations elites' links with other elites: the case of Slovenia**

The civil sector in Slovenia is less developed than those in Western European countries. However, one cannot neglect the fact that more than 20,000 NGOs were registered at the end of 2003 in Slovenia.<sup>5</sup> Some also have international contacts and/or are affiliated with European NGO/CSO networks. It is true that – according to quantitative research – the networking of Slovenian CSO networking is 'less developed, less organised, and fragmented' (Mreženje nevladnih organizacij, 2005). But, what can be said about quantitative links? Our research tried to give at least a partial answer to this.

In our questionnaire we asked CSO elites about their links with political elites (Slovenian parliament, government, and political parties, EU parliament and EU Commission) with other CSO elites (national and international levels, EU networks), with business, the mass media and academic-cultural elites. The questionnaire had two parts. In the first part we asked open questions about the functions of the people with whom they have contacts; about the main characteristics of their contacts; and about the results of these contacts. In the second part we asked about the prevailing mode of the contacts (formal/informal, direct/indirect), their frequency and intensity, and about their nature (superior attitude/equal relationships and weak/strong readiness for support and co-operation) (all questions were structured in the same way; see Appendix 1). In addition, we asked about links with members and/or collaborators. We received 13 mostly answered questionnaires (out of the 20 that were sent; for a list of the CSOs see Appendix 2). We received answers from different kinds of CSOs (associations, institutions, foundations and social movements, with different spheres of activity: sports, social care, ecology, a trade

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when they are not 'fundamentalist' in cultural orientation and educate their members and in holders of pluralistic civil society.

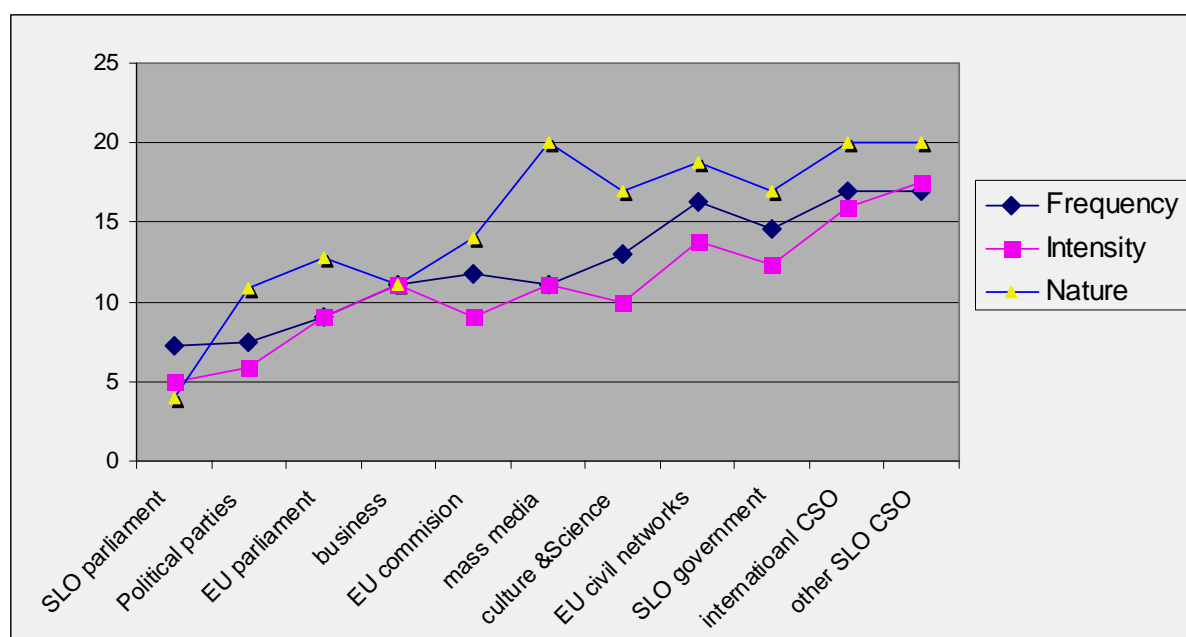
<sup>5</sup> According to Črnjak Meglič (in CNVOS – Social platform, 2006: 50-60) the number of registered NGO (in Slovenia) on 31.12.2005 was: 19.069 (voluntary) associations, 149 institutions, 449 private institutes, 645 religious organisations, and 22 non-profit co-operatives

union, a consumer organisation; we also included the network of CSO) but clearly they do not represent a Slovenian sample. Nevertheless, the analyses produced some results that are so typical that they can be accepted as the prevailing way of contact.

First, regarding formal and informal contacts with the different elites it could be said that there are no significant differences. Regarding direct/indirect contacts the analysis shows that that most CDOs use direct contacts, with the exception of the EU parliament and EU Commission with a higher share of indirect contacts.

Regarding other questions (the frequency, intensity and nature of contacts) there are more or less significant differences between CSOs – see Graph 1. The most frequent answers are irregular contacts (not regular); a strong and middle level of intensity of contacts; equal and interested contacts. Exceptions are the national parliament, political parties and the EU Commission.

Graph 2. Frequency, intensity and nature of contacts of CSOs elites' with other elites



Vertical values in the graph are quantified values of the frequency, intensity and nature of the contacts. For the frequency of the contacts we used the following modification: casual: 0, periodic: 1, regular: 2. For the intensity of the contacts we used the following modification: weak: 0, in between: 1, intense: 2. For the nature of the contacts we used the following modification: superiority: -1, equal but weak: 1, equal and supportive: 2.

From Graph 1 we can conclude that CSOs have their most weak and unequal contacts with the national parliament and political parties. Parliament expresses also the highest level of superior (3 of 10 answers) and equal but loose (7 of 10 answers) contacts; these contacts are not deep (only surface contacts: 5 of 10 answers). Only slightly better are

contacts with political parties: not deep contacts (4 of 10 answers), and equal but loose linkages (7 of 10 answers).

Contacts with the government are in contrast with linkages with the national parliament and political parties: a big share of linkages is very intense and frequent. The level of intensity and frequency of linkages are not much lower than linkages with other CSOs at the national, international and EU networks levels. The strong contacts with other CSOs are not surprising.

Regarding contacts with mass media, cultural-scientific and business elites we cannot say too much? The pattern of contacts is not very different from the average pattern, except that contacts with business are less intense and more business elites share a superior relationship with CSOs.

The level of contacts with the EU Commission is, not surprisingly, lower than with the national government but still relatively strong. On the other hand, it is a surprise that contacts with the European parliament are better and more intense than with the Slovenian national parliament.

To explain some of these unexpected findings we undertook an in-depth interview with leading persons in the CNVOS, numerically the most important national network of CSOs.

Regarding political parties and the Slovenian parliament they answered that many CSOs do not want to contact political parties 'because other CSOs would accuse them of being politically connected with that party'. Also, most CSOs do not want to be labelled 'left' or 'right' etc. On the other hand, some CSOs are very close to a certain political party but according to the interviews they are only small in number. We were surprised by such an answer because on certain occasions (mostly with domestic politics like minority issues, the national law about the mass media, but also as regards NATO, antiglobalisation issues and some other topics) it is clear that some relatively strong civil (or pseudo-civil) organisations support definite parties. In the conversation with members of the parliamentary Board for Domestic Politics they confirmed our presumption. Yet, strong connections between CSOs and a political party are more often and more intense when domestic issues are involved than with European affairs.

Probably there is also another reason why our research shows such a low level of CSOs' contacts with the Slovenian parliament. According to someone from the parliamentary Board for European Affairs only certain CSOs are interested in coming to open sessions. Those are CSOs which deal with human rights, ecology and institutional aspects. On our list there were relatively many CSOs which work in other fields (or have such strong financial support that they use other ways of expressing their interests).

Strong contacts with the government are not a surprise because for many CSOs it is necessary to contact the government 'due to financing issues'.

We also analysed differences between the different types of CSOs. Although we could not find any significant differences, a few differences were found between CSOs with members who do volunteer work and other CSOs. They have slightly more frequent contacts and also a more intense and equal nature of relationships (7-10 of 10) than CSOs without members' volunteer work (only 5-7 of 10). We could not analyse specifics in terms of the characteristics of Putnam and Olson groups because of the small number of CSOs involved.

Last but not least we tried to find out if CSOs play an intermediary role or not. The answers to the questionnaires show that most CSO elites' have intense and regular contacts with members (if they have individual members) or co-operators. But these answers are not enough to allow any conclusions to be drawn. It was stressed in the interview that the CSO leadership rarely communicates with members about issues they have to decide on. Mostly they informally communicate with a small number of members or decide alone. Answers about the status of the elites and members show they have a similar level of status and education and the lack of communication could not be connected with status.

Since other data were not available at the time of writing the paper, we can estimate that the level of intermediation is between a little and not very high. For more answers here additional research is needed.

## **Conclusions**

According to the presented result it is evident that the role of civil society and its elites has been changing in the last ten to fifteen years. Governments and politicians have recognised civil society as a partner in dialogue and a social actor that needs to be integrated into decision-making processes. Some democratic European countries have legalised social dialogue in the last year, while in others such legalisation is still underway.

Civil society in Slovenia remains less developed, less organised and less connected than in most other EU countries. However, according to our data an important share of Slovenian CSO elites has relatively strong and regular contacts with both other CSOs at the national, international and EU levels, and political, business, mass media and cultural-scientific elites. Most surprising was the finding that there are very often and qualitatively good contacts with the governmental elite – in fact, contacts with the government have the same intensity as with other CSO elites at the national and EU levels. On the other hand, CSO elites report much fewer contacts with Slovenian political parties and the parliament. Why is this so? It seems that most CSOs do not want to be connected with a single political party. Yet, because it often happened that one CSO was labelled by other CSOs as being close to a specific political party the leadership wilfully decided to have less contacts with

parties. However, this could also be interpreted as a consequence of the unfinished transition process of the civil sphere after the collapse of socialism and more than a decade of one leading political party holding government. On the other hand, one cannot forget that all of Europe is seeking new ways including the civil sphere to ensure genuine democratic development.

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**Appendix 1.** Prevailing mode, frequency, intensity and nature of the contacts (please mark your choice)

Prevailing mode of contacts	
A: formal B: informal C: formal and informal	A: direct contacts B: indirect contacts
Frequency and intensiveness of contacts	
A: casual B. periodic (for example, a certain project) C: regular	A: weak contacts B: intensive contacts C: in between
Nature of contacts	
A: superior attitude with expressions of disinterest in goals of the CSO B: equal relationship but weak interest C: equal relationship with strong support and co-operation	

## **Appendix 2.** List of civil organisations which answered the questionnaire

1. Pravno-informacijski center nevladnih organizacij, Ljubljana (PIC; Legal Information Centre of NGOs)
2. CNVOS, Center za informiranje, sodelovanje in razvoj nevladnih organizacij (Center for information, cooperation and development of Slovenian NGOS; network of CSOs)
3. Pergam. Konfederacija sindikatov Slovenije (Pergam. Confederation of Trade Unions Slovenia)
4. Zveza potrošnikov Slovenije (Slovenian Consumer Association)
5. BirdLife Slovenia
6. Zveza ekoloških kmetij Slovenije (Association of ecological farmers)
7. Združenje delodajalcev Slovenije (Slovenian Employer Association)
8. Fokus - Društvo za sonaraven razvoj (Focus – association for sustainable development)
9. Mladinski ceh (Youth Guild)
10. Slovenska univerzitetna športna zveza (Slovene University Sport Association)
11. Panevropsko gibanje (Panevropa, Slovenian pan-European movement)
12. Karitas Slovenia
13. Umanotera (Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development).

# Professionalisation of Non-governmental Sector: Are Civil Society Associations Becoming Elitist?

Primož Kristan

## Introduction

This paper is dealing with professionalisation of non-governmental sector. Research questions will be supported by conceptual frame of reference backed up by some empirical evidence. As our indicative data reveal, in Slovenia, communication links between civil society organizations<sup>6</sup> and other social actors (state institutions, business, EU bodies, the media, etc.) are established, meaning that civil society is playing a certain role among other actors in shaping societal and political space. Also on the basis of our data, we can observe strong tendency towards professionalisation within the NGO sector. From the perspective of NGO leadership, current situation in Slovenia, when compared to some other European countries (for example NGO sustainability index)<sup>7</sup>, suggests rather under-organized and less-professionalized civil society. In short, intention of this paper is to point out some current and relevant issues and debates concerning the relationship between the state and civil society that might speak in favour of the growing trend of professionalization in the Slovenian NGO sphere.

### 1) Research questions

Slovenia became a member of the European Union in 2004 and will take over the rotating six months presidency in 2008. European Union is putting high hopes on civil society as an important 'contributor' to legitimacy and democracy in the context of multilevel governance. Along with the growing role of transnational civil society comes the pressure (necessity) on civil society associations to become increasingly organized, bureaucratized and professional. On one side, European Union (in particular the European Commission) fosters the role of civil society in the decision-making processes and, on the other, it stimulates towards leadership-oriented type of organization culture by triggering increasing demand for competence (expertise) in communication. EU civil society programs, which include direct financial support to NGOs (rather than channelling them through national and regional authorities) as a

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<sup>6</sup> Slovenian civil society organizations are engaged in sports and recreation (27.6%), culture and art (17.73%), fire brigades (8.7%), tourism development (7.9%), interest association (7.2%), education (4.52%), social security (3.6%), business, occupation and other association (2.63%), animal and plant protection (2.63%), health protection (2.14%), environment protection (1.54%) and other (13.75%) (source: Umanotera)

<sup>7</sup> Thus NGO Sustainability Index 2006 places Slovenia well behind other constitute countries of the Northern Tier (Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia). All countries apart from Slovenia are placed in the segment 'consolidation' whereas Slovenia firmly lags behind in the 'mid-transition' section.



part of democracy promotion, are in favour of large, better-organized NGOs with specific resources and expertise (Stewart 2005). More authors (Krzeczunowicz 2004, Lagerspetz 2004) confirm the trend of increasing complexity and its impact on NGOs to become more sophisticated and international, oriented towards advocacy. As a consequence a “more stratified and hierarchical civil society realms appears likely to emerge, especially since this development is convenient for many national government officials as well” (Lagerspetz in Stewart 2005).

How do these processes influence civic participation, if civil society is perceived as a mediating sphere between the individual and big institutions (as conceptualized by Berger and Luckmann)? Does hierarchically segmented and stratified civil society still qualify as a mediator and representative of small-world interests or are civil society associations evolving into one more in a series of elitist actors, besides the state and economy institutions? If, assumingly, the trend of professionalism within civil society also means constitution of leadership that primarily communicates with other social and political actors (elites) and less so with the base (membership), we encounter the situation of civil society associations becoming elitist in a way that leadership distances itself from the followers (‘the iron law of oligarchy’) instead of providing incentives for citizens active participation. Possible existence of this (negative) type of elitism would consequently raise questions regarding representation of interests, lack of legitimacy in constituency (and the whole decision-making process as well), social exclusion, etc. and would therefore exert negative associational democratic effects according to normative expectations (theory).

On the other side however, elitism can also induce positive democratic effects and go hand in hand with democracy. The ‘theory of democratic elitism’ (Schumpeter, 1942; Dahl, 1971; Sartori, 1987) holds that power of elites is not preventing the rule of the people since “in deciding elite competitions for government office, the people still rule” (Higley, 2007: 249). Mark E. Warren, for example, assumes that even less internally democratic and professionalized associations can exert important democratic effects. “Larger and more highly organized associations often have their own experts and professionals who can assimilate and convey information in ways that would be far too costly in time, expertise and attention for individuals to accomplish on their own” (Warren, 2001: 72). Constitution of expert or professional associational ‘elite’ can provide an “epistemic division of labour, without which individuals would be more overwhelmed by the amount and complexity of information than they already are” (ibid.). In this sense associations that are more inclined towards exertion of change (influence on political decision-making) can be very effective.

The main question therefore is: to what extent and under which circumstances do professional (knowledge and expertise based) associational elites, in facing the dilemma of efficient interest representation (the logic of influence) on one side and satisfying its membership on other (the logic of membership), truly exert democratic effects? What kind of democratic

effects (positive/negative) does growing demand for professionalism have on different associational types, particularly those associations faced with the greatest pressure of becoming professional, in the context of EU multilevel governance?

Answers to these broader questions referring to democracy or elitism are not within the range of this paper, however I believe they need to be posed in order to put the research in the desired perspective.

European Union is, especially since the enlargement in 2004, a vast political arena. European integration is based on policy creating processes in which “authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government – subnational, national and supranational” (Hooghe and Marks, 2000). EU institutions tend to encourage the role of civil-society organizations in decision-making processes (which is also stated in the White Paper on European Governance) in order to, among other, efficiently include resources like expertise and knowledge into political decision-making. Civil society thus has its own voice and its own expertise on grounds of which it is capable of forming common position and having the opportunity to promote its positions within political decision-making processes (Rek, 2007). Advocacy groups, i.e. privileged and well educated citizens who possess the ‘knowledge of how to combine’ are thus becoming very powerful and influential. But again, on the other hand, recent studies show that NGOs’ can be very influential in the stage of policy making and less so in shifting policy outcomes in their favour (Duer and DeBievre, 2007).

The notion of professionalisation in civic associations is referring to Theda Skocpol’s observation of transformation of civic life in America after 1960s when due to social movements (gender, racial, activist, etc.) a new, more agile and flexible type of groups emerged that were, in contrast to vast membership federations, far better organized and consequently more successful in achieving their goals. Professionalized ‘advocacy groups’ are described as “relatively centralized and professionally led organizations focused on policy lobbying and public education” (Skocpol, 1999). These type of groups quickly became trendsetters, highly specialized in various fields of interest (constituency, cause, activity) and were - what is important in our context – without membership or, as Skocpol puts it, only modest ‘complements of mass adherence’. Members in this regard can be perceived as consumers with policy preferences consequently meaning privileged position of wealthier and better educated people. According to Robert Wuthnow the term ‘non-profit professionals’ describes people with special skills, possession or access to ample resources, commitment and devotion to full-time efforts (Wuthnow, 1998), characteristics that are perceived to be necessary equipment for dealing with contemporary complex social problems.

## **2) Empirical grounds**

Empirical part of my research is deriving from a pilot study in which contacts between Slovenian trans-nationally active NGO leadership and other social actors (on national,

international and trans-national (EU) level) were studied. Slovenia as a post-socialist country, where superior position of political elite in relation to civil society characterised transitional processes, civil associations are slowly getting a more substantial role. The gap between EU institutions and European citizens which is entering public debates after French and Dutch rejection of constitutional treaty can now be sensed in Slovenia also. By becoming a part of EU in 2004, new incentives and opportunities opened up for Slovenian NGOs to become active at the EU level. Regarding Slovenian historical circumstances and context resulting in relatively weak role of civil society towards the state, EU is also the opportunity for civil society to assert greater influence on political decision-making.

### **NGO Conference**

Recently a conference organized by the Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of Slovenian NGOs<sup>8</sup> was held in Ljubljana where non-governmental organizations met in order to assess the following:

- possibilities in reducing the gap between citizens and EU institutions,
- opportunities for dialog with EU institutions,
- networking possibilities and opportunities to claim EU financial resources,
- in what ways NGOs can provide incentives for active EU citizenship in local environment

At the conference representatives of international and trans-national (EU) non-governmental networks, like European Citizens Action Service (ECAS), European Council for Non-profit Organizations (CEDAG), CEE Citizens' Network, World of NGOs (Austria), European House (Hungary), European Movement (Germany) and WCVA – Wales Council for Voluntary Action, were also present. Importance of networking on the EU level, (in order to gain influence in relation to EU institutions) was stressed unanimously by the participants.

Networks significantly strengthen the NGOs in a way that they guarantee: key access to the right actors, providing information on financial sources, knowledge exchange between membership organizations, exchange of examples of good practice, etc. According to CNVOS analysis of Slovenian NGOs' inclusion in EU networks<sup>9</sup>, Slovenian non-governmental sector is underdeveloped, poorly organized and unconnected. With membership in 62 out of 100 networks included into analysis, Slovenia takes place 21 among 25 EU members.<sup>10</sup> Referring to these results we can assume that NGOs in Slovenia are not as 'professionalized' as are in some old EU member states. Therefore main conclusions at the conference were referring to recommendations for making network strategies, increasing cooperation, dialogue,

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<sup>8</sup> CNVOS – Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of Slovenian NGOs is a non-governmental organization established by 27 NGOs with the aim of developing, bonding and cooperation of NGOs. Currently it represents about 250 NGOs.

<sup>9</sup> CNVOS analyzed inclusion of Slovenian NGOs in EU networks in a comparison with other EU member states in 100 selected networks (source: Mreženje nevladnih organizacij, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> According to the same analysis the most represented country in EU networks is Great Britain (797 members in 100 selected networks)

transparency, enhancing contacts with the media, etc. in order to abolish the still prevailing perception (by citizens as well as by other social actors) of NGOs as “*merely voluntary associations oriented towards afternoon activities*” and mostly for the purpose of being able to successfully and efficiently use available EU resources (financial, information, knowledge, etc.). On basis of presented information, strong tendency within NGOs towards professionalism is evident.

### **Case studies in Slovenia and Poland**

Due to lack of data in February and March 2007 a series of structured interviews (with some open ended questions) has been conducted regarding civil society organization (CSO) leadership’s contacts with other social actors (political parties, parliament, government, other CSO on national, international and EU level, European Parliament, European Commission, business sector, media and science, culture, technology). The aim of the research was to collect indicative data that would provide us with some initial clues in trying to tackle the notion of CSO becoming elitist. Our assumption was that by identifying networks through which CSO leaders communicate with other social actors would reveal their inclusive or exclusive character of mediation (knowledge, interest, information, etc.), particularly between EU and national base. The study is a joined project with our Polish associates who performed a similar research in Poland. Results of both countries are going to be presented in the form of a comparative case study in a RG 5 CONNEX workshop on ‘National elites and their trans-national networks’ in June 2007 in Piran (Slovenia).

My approach regarding this study will be in defining the links (channels) that NGOs are using to assert their influence on political decision-making and also in getting some insight about Slovenian NGOs inclusion in EU networks. The data are indicative and not intended to make major generalizations. Combined with the Polish sample, the data will allow comparative analysis.

Analysing the data (Slovenian part), we may conclude that civil society organizations connections to other social actors differ according to strength, content and number. In fact, some organizations do not have any contacts with certain spheres at all, whereas other NGOs are strongly related to all other social actors.

Among most active (in terms of connections in general) NGOs are those who have direct, frequent, successful and cooperative contacts with the highest level of representatives in respective social spheres. Regarding relationship between NGOs and other social actors we found out relations to the business sphere, state parliament, national political parties and European parliament are rather weak in comparison with other social actors. The strongest relations are between NGO themselves and the government (table 1). We took under consideration the following indicators: direct, frequent, successful and cooperative contacts in addition with supportive attitude. The strongest are contacts between NGOs on national level (60), NGOs on EU level (56), the government (51), NGOs on international level (47), sphere

of culture-science-technology (43), the media (34), European Commission (29), business (26), European parliament (24), national political parties (20) and state parliament (19) (table 2). In addition to that we must also mention that not all NGOs have contacts with all social actors. Spheres according to greatest contact deficiency in relation to NGOs are: business (- 4/13), national political parties and the media (both - 3/13), state parliament and European Commission (both -2/13), European parliament and culture-science-technology (both -1/13). All twelve NGOs have strong relations with membership. Direct and frequent contacts are established in all organizations, cooperation as a part of membership role is reported in 11 of 13 organizations whereas intensive relation is mentioned in 9 of 13 CSO. This could indicate that professionalism in these cases did not result in losing connection with organizational base and we might speak of positive elitism in this regard. However we do not know yet since additional interviews with membership need to be applied.

Table 1 indicates strong relationship between NGOs and government. Of 13 CSOs only one (*Mladinski ceh*) does not have direct relation to the government. The government is most supportive towards *ZPS*, *PIC*, *FOKUS*, *SUSA* (only after prime ministers direct support), *Caritas*, *Pan-Europe*, *Birdlife*, *Pergam* and *Umanotera* (also arrogant - depending on case). According to communication frequency and success we may conclude, that the strongest relation with government have: *Umanotera*, *ZPS*, *ZDS*, *FOKUS*, *SUSA*, *Caritas* and *Birdlife*. *ZZEK* (*Slovenian Ecological Farmers*) stands out as 'representative' of weak communication due to none or negligible results.

Such a big difference in NGOs relation towards government (second strongest relation) on one, and the state parliament (weakest relation) came a bit surprisingly considering the option of achieving political influence through lobbying in the parliament (table 2).

Taking into reconsideration NGOs weak relation to national political parties as well, we may conclude that lobbying is not the first and most frequent option of influencing political decision-making in Slovenia. After bringing out that issue in an open debate at the conference, NGO representatives responded quite vividly arguing that real influence can be exerted in the phase of governmental preparation of acts, documents and proposals. If this would have been the case, than our data indicate that Slovene NGOs (at least the analysed ones) in this regard are not that under-organized as they claim to be. Informal conversation revealed that contacts with state parliament are weak due to certain political issues. Some NGOs do rather not become involved with political parties because of their political criteria for evaluation of contents. If one does not align with particular party political preferences, then influence is not very likely to be exerted.

Table 1: contacts between CSOs and government

CSO \ CONTACTS WITH GOVERNMENT	U M	Z P S	Z D S	P I C	C N V O S	Z Z E K	F O K U S	S U S A	M C E H	K A R	P A N E V	B I R D	P E R G A M
Contact	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Contact level:													
- highest	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
- high	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	+
- medium	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+	+
Contact purpose:													
- cooperation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	
- lobbying		+						+				+	
- information	+	+	+		+		+			+			
- education	+	+											
- support								+		+			
- mediation				+	+					+			
- counselling		+											
- talks			+			+					+		+
Contact results:													
- successful	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+
- negligible	+		+			+							
- no result	+					+							
Contact mode:													
- formal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
- informal		+	+	+	+		+			+	+	+	+
- direct	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	+
- indirect	+								+				
- accidental													
- frequent	+	+	+				+	+		+		+	
- occasional	+			+	+	+			+		+		+
- intensive		+		+				+		+		+	
- surface									+				
- in between	+		+		+	+	+				+		+
Attitude tow. CSO:													
- arrogant	+						+						
- equal, vain interest	+		+		+	+	+		+				
- supportive	+	+		+			+	+		+	+	+	+

LEGEND: UM – Umanotera, ZPS – Slovenian Consumer Association, ZDS – Slovenian Employers Association, PIC – Legal Information Centre, CNVOS - Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of Slovenian NGOs, ZZEK – Association of Ecological Farmers, FOKUS – Environmental organization, SUSA – Slovenian University Sports Association, MCEH (MLADINSKI CEH) – Youth organization, KAR – Caritas, PANEVR – Pan-Europe, BIRD – Birdlife, PERGAM – Trade Union

### European Citizens' Consultations

Reported arrogant attitude of state parliament delegates towards NGOs and NGOs leadership's unwillingness of getting involved with political parties were being challenged at the "European Citizens' Consultations" in the frame of 88. Regular parliamentary session.<sup>11</sup> Slovenian national partner for the project is CNVOS (Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of NGOs) who reported about the 'consultation' activities to the

<sup>11</sup> "European Citizens' Consultations" are one of six civil society projects founded by European Commission within the plan D. The aim of these consultations is to bring out views of European citizens about the future of European Union and to present them directly to the policy makers. Consultations started in February 2007 in all 27 EU member states.

In Slovenia, in February 2007, 45 incidentally selected citizens participated in a vivid debate around three thematic issues (Energy and Environment, Social Welfare and Family, Global role of EU and Migrations) selected by European citizens in a preliminary session in Brussels. A selected citizen will represent Slovenian views in Brussels in May 2007, results will be submitted to the European Commission in June.

The project is being financed and organized by the independent consortium of foundations and non-profit organizations from the whole Europe and under the leadership of the King Baudouin Foundation (source: public parliamentary session).

Parliamentary Committee for EU matters. Parliamentary session, on which representatives of state parliament, government, citizens, NGOs, European Commission and European Parliament were taking part, was open for public.

Table 2: contacts between CSOs and state parliament

CSO \ CONTACTS WITH STATE PARLIAMENT	U M	Z P S	Z D S	P I C	C N V O S	Z Z E K	F O K U S	S U S A	M C E H	K A R	P A N E V	B I R D	P E R G A M
Contact	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+
Contact level:													
- highest				+				+		+	+		+
- high	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			+			+
- medium	+	+			+								
Contact purpose:													
- cooperation	+	+				+							
- lobbying		+				+	+						
- information		+			+					+	+		+
- education		+											
- support							+						+
- mediation				+									
- counselling	+	+								+			
- talks			+			+					+		+
Contact results:													
- successful		+		+	+	+	+	+		+			
- negligible	+		+		+								+
- no result	+		+								+		
Contact mode:													
- formal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+					+
- informal		+			+					+	+		+
- direct	+	+		+	+		+	+		+	+		+
- indirect			+			+		+		+			
- accidental			+			+					+		
- frequent													
- occasional	+	+		+	+		+	+		+			+
- intensive													
- surface	+		+		+		+	+					
- in between		+		+						+	+		+
Attitude tow. CSO:													
- arrogant	+				+	+	+	+					
- equal, vain interest	+	+	+	+			+			+	+		+
- supportive													

LEGEND: **UM** – Umanotera, **ZPS** – Slovenian Consumer Association, **ZDS** – Slovenian Employers Association, **PIC** – Legal Information Centre, **CNVOS** - Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of Slovenian NGOs, **ZZEK** – Association of Ecological Farmers, **FOKUS** – Environmental organization, **SUSA** – Slovenian University Sports Association, **MCEH** (MLADINSKI CEH) – Youth organization, **KAR** – Caritas, **PANEVR** – Pan-Europe, **BIRD** – Birdlife, **PERGAM** – Trade Union

Main issues of the debate were in the light of fostering the dialogue between civil society and institutions. The importance of the current session was particularly stressed, since this was the first such event so far considering ‘bottom up’ initiative enjoying strong institutional support. It was interesting however, that cooperation (and readiness for support in matters of enhancing the dialogue between civil society and institutions) with the state parliament was described as very good. Surprisingly, in opposition to our expectations, numerous parliamentary delegates showed a positive approach and stressed the importance of civil society in various aspects (and outcomes), like:

- Civil society can stimulate common problem solving on the EU level, which is momentary not possible due to “too narrow” interests of particular states and state institutions.
- Civil society can exert pressure on European Union in the fields where ‘inconsistencies between reality and EU legislation’ occur (in this case a straight appeal was made on NGOs regarding social politics)
- Civil society can stress much more efficiently the ways in which general consumption is to be reduced for the purpose of environmental protection (the burden lies largely on the shoulder of civil society)
- A shift was made in the belief that the role of civil society is confined merely to criticism of whatever governmental option, towards the perception of civil society as an important problem-solver; inclusion and engagement of citizens is therefore a realistic option
- Constitution of “interactive” state parliament web page was suggested by one parliamentary delegate as an effective option of establishing cooperation with citizens. In this respect encouragement of young generations to become actively involved in policy making (addressing issues) is necessary, since very high degree of stimulus is needed to evoke interest for political issues. Experiences show that high quality forums can actually recruit (engage) important ideas and solutions
- A formal petition in support of permanent dialogue between civil society and institutions, i.e., permanent transfer of citizen opinion towards policy makers was being signed by some parliamentary delegates.

On the basis of abovementioned findings we can say that state parliament and the delegates are seemingly not as ‘arrogant’ and ‘unsupportive’ as described by the majority of NGOs leaders. On the contrary, some delegates expressed a great deal of knowledge, expertise and interest regarding issues that fit the domain of civil society. What was interesting and evoke my concern, was the fact that there was no report whatsoever about this, seemingly very important and unprecedented, parliamentary session in the primetime TV news. Since greater need for media coverage was also pointed out severely as an important contribution towards greater information of citizens and respectively raising consciousness about active participation in addressing collective issues and policy making, non-coverage of the event in primetime news came to me a bit surprisingly. However, a thorough media coverage analysis would provide a clearer view on actual readiness and efforts for raising awareness among citizens.

On the other side, modest communication link with European Parliament and even European Commission as indicated by the data, could speak in favour of underdeveloped strategy of Slovenian NGOs. This notion was partially confirmed by the head of the European Parliament Information Office for Slovenia with the argument that on more than one occasion there was no response by Slovenian NGOs regarding explicitly offered resources for EU projects.



## **NGO Sustainability Index and employment level**

Additional evidence in support of under-developed Slovenian NGO sector can be found also, if one considers the NGO Sustainability index<sup>12</sup> results. Referring to the level of NGO sector consolidation in a particular country, NGO sustainability is constituted of seven different dimensions of the NGO sector: legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, NGO infrastructure and public image. The NGO Sustainability index is in the domain of the United States Agency for International Development (Bureau for Europe and Eurasia - Office of Democracy, Governance and Social Transition).

Regarding estimated low NGO sustainability in Slovenia, much goes at the expense of low financial viability. »*Slovenian NGOs had found the process of accessing EU structural funds frustrating and disappointing. Although formally they could apply for several projects, a study conducted by PIC and REC at the end of 2005 showed that NGOs were rarely beneficiaries of these projects, with the funds often going instead to municipalities, public institutes, etc.*« (NGO Sustainability Report 2006). Furthermore, there was a new Act on Associations adopted in 2006 that brings along some regulations which will affect sector in a negative way, like specially defined bodies and competencies for setting NGOs management structure. In this respect, previous act was more flexible and left more space to associations. Despite legally adopted procedure regarding consultations with NGOs as part of governmental decision-making, in practice, these procedure has been breached several times already. According to the 2006 NGO Sustainability Report, the drafting process of the National Development Plan is improving, however NGOs comments were not integrated for the most part of occasions. Report also acknowledges that considerably higher governmental funds are available to support NGOs than in other CEE countries. This might also help to explain close relation between Slovenian NGOs and the government.<sup>13</sup>

Slovenia in comparison to some other countries that constitute the Northern Tier is placed considerably low.

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<sup>12</sup> The NGO Sustainability index is in the domain of the United States Agency for International Development (Bureau for Europe and Eurasia - Office of Democracy, Governance and Social Transition). It is based on expert group discussions between USAID, local NGO experts and international donors, that take place in each country. Slovenian experts engaged in 2006 report came from Legal Information Centre (PIC).

<sup>13</sup> In an international Johns Hopkins survey that includes average for 22 states, the data for Slovenia on organizational financial sources in 2004 show that 36.3% of organizational income comes from public resources (42% is the average of 22 states included in survey), 30% from product sale and services (47% is the average for 22 states included), 20.9% from donations and sponsorship (11% is the average for 22 states included) and 12.6% from other sources.

Table 3: NGO Sustainability index:

Scores for Slovenia	2006	2005	2004	2003
<b>NGO Sustainability</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>
Legal Environment	3.5	3.7	N/A	N/A
Organizational Capacity	4.2	4.2	N/A	N/A
Financial Viability	4.5	4.5	N/A	N/A
Advocacy	4.0	4.0	N/A	N/A
Service Provision	3.5	3.6	N/A	N/A
Infrastructure	4.0	4.1	N/A	N/A
Public Image	4.1	4.2	N/A	N/A

Source: NGO Sustainability Index

Values: 1.0-3.0 'Consolidation', 3.0-5.0 'Mid-Transition', 5.0-7.0 'Early Transition'

NGO Sustainability index emphasizes the use of foreign funds and financial support that, in case of Slovenia as the most developed CEE country, does not play such a significant role. It is well known that some foundations, like SOROS for example retreated from Slovenia in the nineties due to Slovenia's solid economic situation. In large it also depends upon the transition model followed up by particular country, for example Estonia pursuing liberal ideas and openness to foreign direct investments, whereas Slovenia on other side, relying more on corporatist approach and general public scepticism towards foreign capital.<sup>14</sup> As we already mentioned above, Slovenian NGOs benefit mostly from governmental funds or foundations established by the government. We can therefore conclude that results of the NGO Sustainability index, placing Slovenia far behind other Eastern European countries, do not provide us with realistic picture of the development of civil society (see Table 4). If we consider the Special EUROBAROMETER 2007 data regarding the extent of active participation or voluntary work for example, Slovenia is with 35% just above the EU-25 average (34%), whereas all other East European countries are placed well behind (Estonia 28%, Hungary 17% and Poland 16%).

Level of professionalization can be estimated also considering level of employment in civil society organizations. The data for Slovenia show low degree of employment in civil society sector. According to Anheier and Salamon, Slovenia with 0.74% of employed in non-governmental sector in 1995 placed behind Hungary (1.3%), the Czech Republic (2.8%) and Slovakia (0.9%). Countries like Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium had between 12.4 and 10.5% of citizens employed in non-governmental sector in the same year. If we compare situation in Slovenia in 1996 and 2004, we can observe little change in the direction toward greater level of employment in civic sector. Proportion of organizations without employed staff decreased from 85.3% in 1996 to 80.6% in 2004. There were 4.9% of organizations with one employee in 1996 (1.5% in 2004) and 3% with two employees in 1996 (0.8 in 2004). There was some growth present in organizations with more employees namely from 6.8%

<sup>14</sup> Regarding foreign direct investments, Estonia had 9.3% of GDP inward flows and 2.4% of GDP outward flows in 2004, whereas Slovenia had 2.2% of GDP inward flows and 1.3% of GDP outward flows according to 2006-07 Eurostat data.

(1996) to 17.1% in 2004, meaning that 17.1% of Slovenian organizations had more employees in 2004.

Table 4: Slovenia in comparison (Estonia, Poland, Hungary):

Scores for 2006:	Slovenia	Estonia	Hungary	Poland
<b>NGO Sustainability</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Legal Environment	3.5	1.8	1.5	2.3
Organizational Capacity	4.2	2.4	2.9	2.6
Financial Viability	4.5	2.5	3.3	2.8
Advocacy	4.0	1.9	3.2	1.8
Service Provision	3.5	2.3	2.4	2.3
Infrastructure	4.0	1.7	2.2	1.8
Public Image	4.1	2.1	3.0	2.2

Source: NGO Sustainability Index

Values: 1.0-3.0 'Consolidation', 3.0-5.0 'Mid-Transition', 5.0-7.0 'Early Transition'

### Expert interview

Additional data were collected in an expert interview with the director and project coordinator of CNVOS (Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of NGOs) in order to deepen our insight regarding some 'critical' issues like the role of membership, leadership, trans-nationalization and relation between NGOs and state parliament (political parties). In accordance with our research questions, presentation of findings will be confined to establishing the growing demand for professionalism and the effects on the relation with organization members.

The respondents confirmed our expectations about non-governmental organizations being submerged to the growing demand for professionalism in order to make feasible effective and influential engagement in national and (especially) trans-national social networks. Demand for professionalism is evident in the fact that *“the sole existence of open channels for communication is not sufficient...the question of networking reflects capability of responsiveness and location of information relevant for your engagement...advantages of networking and financial support are pre-conditions for the quality of dialogue...to build capability for dialogue...not only that opportunities exist, but to be capable and prepared for these opportunities.”*

According to the respondents, bigger, well-organized NGOs with greater communicational skills (including “political way of thinking”) have the advantage in claiming *state-financial support*, which is (besides social networking ability), crucial for successful engagement in trans-national networks. It was established, that lack of financial support among many Slovenian NGOs represents the main factor for absence of their greater activity in trans-national networks. The role of the state in this regard is considered un-supportive. Slovene

NGOs are striving for an agreement with the government <sup>15</sup> in which, among other things, issues concerning financial support, taxation, employment subventions, and partnership with the state (government) would be legally regulated. Current governmental position is not in support of such an agreement, “*namely the government stated that this agreement is not needed in the form of a document...it should rather be incorporated in strategic form*”. According to the content of proposed document, tendency towards professionalism can be spotted also within NGOs themselves (not solely as a response to external factors, i.e. Europeanization).

Another (hindering) factor that affects NGOs participation is (apart from financial resources and social networking ability, i.e. communication skills) *access to proper information*. According to the respondents information accessibility *per se* among Slovenian NGOs is not as problematic as it is the possession of proper knowledge of which information are relevant and in what ways they can be effectively used. This, again is attached to the possession of resources where more “professionalized” organizations have the advantage. “*Accessibility to information about things is very good...but the problem lies in the fact that you must be conscious and capable enough of finding and selecting the relevant information...*” Despite numerous existing information channels some NGOs complain about being under-informed.<sup>16</sup> To the question why there are disagreements between institutional (national and EU) representatives and NGOs regarding access to information, respondents told us “*they will always argue they provided us with enough information, but I can always find hundred people in the sector claiming they did not know anything...*”

The next relevant point is related to the finding that one-way information flow based on institutional incentives (top-down) is not sufficient. *Civil dialogue* is - after (EU) institutions merely providing information - considered to be “the next step” in including civil society in multi-level governance. Civil dialogue presupposes active citizenship. Several projects, among other also Plan D, are being sponsored by the European Commission for the purpose of stimulating EU citizens towards active participation in collective issues. “*...within the Plan D there is a great emphasis on the contact between European institutions and citizens, on one side in providing information and channels for citizens to learn about their possibilities in EU, communication links to (EU) institutions...on the other side this production of information is a one-way process, therefore striving towards civil dialogue became stimulated*

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<sup>15</sup> Members of non-governmental organizations, as members of Initiative for the future of NGOs, formed a proposition of »dialogue with the government« that started with a national conference on 17.12.2003. It is particularly stressed that proposed document reflects (represents), not only position of narrow group of initiators, but the standpoint of broader non-governmental public. Content of the document includes four priority areas: partnership or civil dialogue, legislation, cadres and financing NGOs (source: CNVOS).

<sup>16</sup> In fact, there was an interesting open clash between NGOs and chief of European Parliament Information office for Slovenia in one of the conferences where, on one side the representative of EU institution claimed that none of the Slovene NGOs applied to (financial) opportunities provided by European Parliament (“*we had to ask them to cooperate...*”) and, on the other side NGO leaders claiming they were not informed.

*by opening internet portals in all languages thereby granting access to broader public. The role of NGOs as catalysts in mediating interests towards institutions and informing citizens on terrain is being particularly stressed.”*

Civil dialogue generates the difference among ‘active citizens’ and those who are not interested in participation. According to respondents’ experience, low responsiveness among Slovenian citizens was evident at some experimental workshops organized by CNVOS and the Centre for democracy.

One aspect within the growing trend for professionalism is also related to the question whether and how this situation affects the relation between NGO leadership and organizational members. According to our respondents membership activities are becoming profitable “...before, people used to work for free...now you can get money for research or applications or anything...now it is becoming profitable.” However level of employment rate within NGO sector in words of one respondent remains very low “*professionalism is in fact in the sense that there is not enough people employed in the sector...we are with 1.3 and 1.7 at the end of the line, only ahead of Romania...*” Growing demand for professionalism in the sense of reassuring state subventions for jobs in NGOs is present in the, already mentioned, document prepared by Slovenian NGOs.

To the question, whether NGO leadership does consult with organizational membership in addressing important issues and to what extent is ‘the voice’ of membership thereby respected, we got the following answer: “*Leadership in fact does not have consultations with the members...and now with this new AIPES model according to which the highest associational organ must confirm...we are witnessing severe problems in gathering people...and then there we have this regulation that if within half an hour 90% of members are not present, only 10 people can decide about anything...and this tells us of democracy...ten people in the heart of organization are in fact the decision-makers. Members do often not even know about the most important things...*”

In order to get more insight into relationship between NGO leadership and membership, additional information from the members themselves will be needed.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of collected data combined with conceptual frame of reference we can conclude that growing demand for professionalism affects behaviour of Slovenian non-governmental organizations. We pointed out some crucial factors as pre-conditions that influence NGOs’ more or less successful engagement.

*Financial support, access to the right information, communicational skills, social networking ability, etc., are resources that make inclusion in trans-national (EU) networks feasible. These*

factors are interdependent, however financial input represents ‘the initial push’ that determines organizational inclusion (exclusion) in trans-national networks (membership fees).

We can therefore conclude that *merely open channels present no sufficient guarantee for participation, since additional resources are needed*. We encounter the situation where non-governmental organizations, in order to exert democratic effects, have to perform in accordance with ‘the logic of influence’. If particular organization is to be successfully engaged in participation (networking), i.e. being able to effectively represent issues or assert influence, it may be necessary to act in pursuit of influence even if this would consequently mean putting the role of membership behind. It was confirmed in the expert interview that NGO leadership does not necessarily need to consult membership regarding important issues. On the contrary, it happens quite often that only a few people decide. According to Warren, associations can (still) exert several democratic effects on individuals, like: efficacy (feeling that one could have an impact on collective actions if one chooses to do so), information (associations as ‘educators’ of individuals), political skills (acquired in associations), civic virtues (cultivation within associations), etc. (Warren, 2001).

In case of Slovenian NGOs, our data show that *bigger, well-organized NGOs with greater communicational skills* (including “political way of thinking”) *have the advantage in claiming state-financial support*. In this sense, unequal opportunities generated by those who have control over the distribution of financial resources, can result in hierarchical and segmented civil society, as noted by several authors (Stewart 2005, Lagerspetz 2004 in Stewart 2005). The situation where, on one side NGOs claim it is in their best interest to avoid contacts with politicians due to ‘lack of neutral political dialogue’ (which was in part also confirmed by our study considering weak contacts between NGOs and political parties, state parliament and EU institutions – contacts with the latter are often established through Slovenian representatives and offices) and, on other side arguing that ‘proper political connections’ can provide benefits to the organization, seems to be paradoxical. It indicates inclusion/exclusion or polarization in alignment with political preferences (political gatekeepers).

Another important issue where ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ approaches towards stimulating civic participation meet, is *civil dialogue*. It was established that new incentives are needed to stimulate citizens towards greater participation in addressing collective issues. Civil dialogue means two-way direct communication between (EU) institutions and citizens through established channels like, interactive web portals, consultations, etc. Several projects, for example, European Citizens’ Consultations (within the Plan D) are sponsored by the European Commission, with the purpose of encouraging active citizenship.

On the basis of example of cooperation between CNVOS (as national partner) and Parliamentary Committee for EU matters we can conclude, that such projects strengthen the relation among non-governmental organizations and state institutions. Our data also confirm

the existence of many channels and opportunities for citizens as well as NGOs to participate at different levels (trans-national networks, institutions), however in order to be able to participate in reality, one must rely on other resources (financial, expertise, communication, etc.). In this regard we can trace another type of division within citizens, namely 'active citizenry' on one side, who possess the necessary resources and interest for 'inclusion' in addressing collective issues (engagement in policy making), and 'the rest', who are due to various reasons (lack of interest, lack of resources) detached from it.

In order to evaluate the degree of professionalisation within civil society sector, more comparative data will be needed. Estimations based on selected (isolated) criterions, like for example relying mainly on capability of NGOs in claiming foreign support and finances in order to evaluate sustainability (NGO Sustainability index), do not provide holistic picture of the development of civil sphere in a particular society. We can conclude, that professionalization, bureaucratization and expertise in communication with other elites (political, business, science) seem inevitable for civil society organizations to be able to represent their interests and influence exertion. If this process will result in segmented and hierarchically structured civil society detached from its roots, we might encounter a new type of elitism that still needs to be researched.

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12. source: secondary data (participation at conferences, parliamentary session, conference proceedings, etc.)
13. source: 2006 NGO Sustainability Report

## PART II.

### Elites and Democracy

#### The Political and Economic Elites in Hungary: Freezing and Oligarchization?

Gabriella Ilonszki and György Lengyel

##### 1. Freezing of the political elite

Hungary began democratization with a negotiated transition and was of high esteem due to quick consolidation and stable institutional patterns - but as of now suffers from political instability. The argument of the lecture is that a major dimension of the reasons is the failure of the representative linkage and the freezing of the representative group itself.

The pace of consolidation and the closing down of the parliamentary elite is the initial point. This will be illustrated *first* by the *decreasing proportion of the newcomers* (see Table 1). We have to note that by 2006 the share of newcomers is virtually at the same level in each party – left or right, government or opposition. An additional point to the question could be in what respects are the hostile political forces different, or for that matter similar to each other.

Table 1 Newcomers in the Hungarian parliament by party, 1994-2006\*

	1994-1998		1998-2002		2002-2006		2006	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
MSZP	185	84.9	26	18.9	87	45.8	51	26.8
Fidesz-MPSZ	6	27.3	114	76.5	40	23.1	42	29.8
SZDSZ	18	25.7	3	11.5	4	17.4	5	25.0
MDF	13	34.2	9	52.9	7	29.2	3	27.3
FKGP	21	75.0	34	65.4	-	-	-	-
KDNP	13	56.5	-	-	-	-	5	21.7
MIÉP	-	-	-	-	9	64.3	-	-
other	2	66.7	-	-	-	-	1	100
all	258	64.2	195	49.1	140	34.0	107	27.7

\*Among all MPs serving the term: 1994-1998 402, 1998-2002 397, 2002-2006 412, in 2006 the 386 MPs elected at the national election.

Legend:

MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party)

Fidesz-MPSZ (Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Alliance)

SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats)

MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum)

FKGP (Independent Smallholder Party)

KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party)

MIÉP (Party of Hungarian Justice and Life)



The second point of illustration will be how the selection criteria got frozen. Table 2 compares MPs in the former (2002-2006) and the current (post 2006) terms as well as the group that dropped out at the last elections in 2006 and those who got in as newcomers at the same time. A careful analysis proves that despite some minor differences all the groups are highly similar.

Table 2 Some characteristics of certain groups of MPs

	Drop-outs from the 2002-2006 term N=114		All MPs in the 2002-2006 term N=412		Newcomers in 2006 N=107		All MPs in 2006 N=386	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Female	13	11.4	40	9.7	19	17.7	41	10.6
Male	101	88.6	372	90.3	88	82.2	345	89.4
Born in Budapest	18	17.3	94	23.9	21	21.6	90	24.0
Law or economic degree	33	31.7	163	40.6	31	29.5	153	39.8
Elected at by-election	13	11.4	26	6.3	-	-	-	-
Party functionary	28	24.6	142	34.5	22	20.6	108	28.0
Local politics background	65	57.0	243	59.0	45	42.1	224	58.0
Has government position	9	7.9	45	10.9	3	2.8	16	4.1
Average age	45.9		46.7		47.7		49.9	
Number of terms	1.9		2.1		1.0		2.5	

Table 3 demonstrates that Hungary follows a different pattern of political elite consolidation than other CEE countries. The Hungarian parliamentary group is even more cemented than that of in most “old” West European democracies. At the same time while other CEE countries witness unstable governments, coalition crises, minority governments etc. the Hungarian government pattern has been very stable. Paradoxically, stable governments, highly consolidated parties, and cemented selection processes run hand in hand with deep elite conflicts in Hungary.

Table 3 Turnover rates in selected Central and East European parliaments (%)

	2nd term	3rd term	4th term	5th term	6th term
Hungary	64.2	49.1	34.0	27.7	
Czech Republic	67.5	46.0	43.5	43.0	45.5
Poland	68.7	50.7	55.2	58.3	
Slovakia	62	48	61	66	56
Romania	71.8	64.1	60.9	58.4	

Czech Rep. 1990; 1992; 1996; 1998; 2002, 2006

Hungary 1990; 1994; 1998; 2002, 2006

Poland 1991; 1993; 1997; 2001, 2005

Romania 1990; 1992; 1996; 2000; 2004

Slovakia 1990; 1992; 1994; 1998; 2002, 2006

## 2. Slowing down of fluctuation of the economic elite

There was a considerable slowing in the process of exchanging the members of the economic elite in the '90s. The rate of novices entering within a year dropped from two-fifths to one-sixth, and the decrease was obvious in all examined segments. The highest drop could be registered in the ministries, as in 1990 in this segment over half the elite members had been in office for a year only - and, remember, the survey was conducted before the elections! There was thus a situation in which a new leading apparatus with little experience in their posts were faced with the institutional changes in economic policy. Characteristically, the rate of novices already began to decrease in the first half of the 1990s. Between 1993 and 1998 the rate decreased at a slower pace or stagnated, to different extents in the different segments. The other noteworthy feature is that the rate of novices was around one-sixth in the 1990s, compared to nearly a quarter in the mid-1980s.

Table 4. Rate of leaders in office for 1 and 3 years (1990-1998, %)

	1990		1993		1998	
	in office for 1 year	in office for 3 years	in office for 1 year	in office for 3years	in office for 1 year	in office for 3 years
ministry	53.9	76.5	15.2	67.4	16.7	43.1
parliament			2.6	17.9	3.4	6.9
bank	46.2	83.1	19.4	71.0	16.7	50.0
enterprise	27.3	48.0	18.2	51.6	15.0	47.5
economic elite	38.1	62.2	15.9	53.4	12.9	36.7
economic elite without parliament	38.1	62.2	17.7	58.0	15.9	46.2
n		364		339		240

The distribution among the leaders occupying their current posts for the three previous years displays a similar tendency. In 1990 their rate was nearly two-thirds, gradually decreasing to just above two-fifths, the share they had had in the mid-1980s. Circulation by three years has segment-specific characteristics. In the ministries and banks their share gradually decreased while among companies it stagnated at first and dropped more massively in the second half of the decade.

Some analyses of the circulation of the economic elite concentrate on the stratum of Hungarian entrepreneurs (Laki 2002), others also touch on foreign-owned companies (Kovách-Csité 1999) and banks (Szalai 2001). The findings of a representative survey of company leaders and the political elite (Szelényi-Glass 2003) have revealed that some three-quarters of the leaders of large enterprises in 1993 had been in some managerial posts in 1988, while the corresponding rate of the new political elite was less than 60%. Another survey has found (Kolosi 2000) that over two-fifths of the market elite of the latter half of the 1990s were recruited from the former redistributive elite. Our survey has demonstrated that the economic elite of 1998 began their top managerial careers in the mid-1980s. Within this group, ministry and bank leaders first occupied responsible posts mainly in the second half of the 1980s while company leaders in the first half.

We have also found that as a retroaction to the massive fluctuation earlier, the exchange of leaders in the ministries slowed down considerably in the 1990s compared not only to 1990 but also to 1984. There are differences between the sectors in this regard. The fluctuation in banks measured by the rate of managers in office for the past three years remained greater than in the late planned economy. As regards enterprises, among the leaders of state-run firms - whose share massively declined becoming restricted to the public utilities and some strategic firms after privatization - earlier low fluctuation sped up by the late 1990s.

All this, however, does not overshadow the overall situation: despite segmental differences and specificities, the circulation of the elite already accelerated in the second half of the 1980s. After culminating in 1990, the process slowed down and got consolidated in the first half of the 1990s. There was a considerable decrease in the fluctuation rate and the percentage of novices also became lower than in the mid-1980s. This especially applies to the ministries, since there the mobility of cadres was significantly higher than the average. The intersegmental differences of the fluctuation rate still marked in 1990 also dwindled.

### 3. Social origin and former party membership

As compared to three-fifths of the economic leaders in the mid-1980s and about half of them in 1990, the rate of elite members of worker or (to a small extent) peasant origin sank below one third in the nineties, and the rates of managers with intellectual or white-collar family background also decreased. By contrast, there was a leap from one-tenth to above two-fifths in the rate of those whose fathers were also in managerial functions. The closing tendency experienced in the early 1990s in regard to the intergenerational mobility patterns in the young generation of the economic elite intensified in the course of the decade. The intersegmental differences as to origin did not increase, but seemed to decrease at the beginning and came to halt at the starting level.

The important change in recruitment was the new predominance of upper middle-class origin that took place in the first half of the decade. Although the model is far from what Putnam would call agglutination (Putnam 1976) and falls short of the extent of closedness of the Hungarian economic elite in the interwar years, the social closure of the Hungarian economic elite was clearly characteristic in the 1990s.

Table 5. Rate of former party members in the Hungarian economic elite in 1990, 1993 and 1998 by segments (%)

segment	1990	1993	1998
ministry	81.4	50.0	52.8
parliament		42.9	50.0
bank	63.8	42.9	33.3
enterprise	74.4	71.9	52.5
total of economic elite	73.8	61.6	49.6
n	364	284	240

Similarly to the share of worker origin, the rate of former party membership in the elite gradually decreased in the period of the transitional economy. Their three-quarters share shrank to half the economic elite at the end of the decade. Many inquiries into the fate of the former party elite registered the circulation of the political elite as against the relative stability of the business elite in the first half of the decade. Our data indirectly confirm and complement these findings. It is, however, to be remembered that this paper is not directly concerned with the fate of the cadre elite but with the role and share of party membership in the elite. The rate of socialist party members considerably decreased among economic

politicians and to a lesser extent among company managers in the first half of the decade. That confirms the results of other investigations (Szelényi-Szelényi 1996, Kolosi-Sági 1996, Róna-Tas-Böröcz 2000). Let it be added that if the bankers are also included in the group of the business elite, the rate of party members among them began to decrease at the beginning of the decade. This is attributable to the revival of the banking sector and to the social features of mostly young managers in newly established banks following the bank act of 1987 - as was noted in the analysis of the age groups, too.

Another complementary remark to be added to the above-mentioned analyses is that by the end of the decade the rate of the former party members did decrease in the sector of enterprises, too, and this rate was about the same as among the top ministry officials. The change in this regard is attributable to the modification in the institutional rather than the personal composition. Intersegmental differences decreased over the decade regarding loyalty criteria. However, examining the top managers of state-run and private companies, the two groups are clearly separated. Nearly four-fifths of the largest state-owned enterprises were party members prior to the system change, while this rate was only two-fifths among private firm directors.

Just as typical a conditioning factor of an economic elite position was party membership in the late phase of the planned economy, so atypical it became in the period of transitional economy. Excepting - understandably - the parliamentary elite, there was no segment of the economic elite that was directly involved in party politics including - very importantly - the senior ministry officials as well. While the elite of the planned economy ensured its closedness through the filters of party membership and education in the first place, in the transitional economy party membership lost its screening function while closedness by origin considerably increased.

#### **4. The chances of oligarchization**

Finally, let us touch on the question formulated after Putnam as follows: Does the stabilization of the recruitment patterns of the elite entail oligarchization, or not? As regards Michels' interpretation, one must admit that oligarchization is a discernible phenomenon in the Hungarian economic elite. The professionalization of party politics, the stabilization of the business hierarchies also imply that the possibility of directly controlling the management's decisions decreases, as does mass interest in such questions. The deceleration of the pace of fluctuation, the tightening of the criteria of access, the rise in the rate of those from the upper class, of the older aged and those having an in-house career also meant that the distance

between the elite and the rest of society increased from the beginning of the decade. As is known, those who take the side of pluralism in elite theory regard this phenomenon as a great danger. We argue that oligarchization appearing with stabilization implies grave social problems when it is paired with the lack of procedural consensus, which entails the weakening of the internal and public control mechanisms of the elite. Such oligarchization may also lead to social disorders when the social trust in the elite is low, when the elite's style of policy-making and business management generates mistrust. All this is connected to the fact that oligarchization has a specifically new connotation which is tied to the post-Soviet transformation and diverges from the classical meaning of the word.

By a recently emerging meaning, the oligarch is a member of the economic elite who gained dollar billions in the course of the economic transformation and privatization and uses this wealth to influence politics (Kets de Vries 2004, Volkov 2004). Is there a chance of oligarchization - quick accumulation of fortunes and their use for political influence - under our circumstances? The question is not quite absurd, as examples can be adduced of the concentration of new fortunes, cross-segmental career patterns, politicians coming from the business sphere and increasing their wealth. The chance of oligarchization in this new sense cannot be precluded, but there are some circumstances that constrain its probability. First, the accumulated fortunes may appear considerable in the perspective of persons or families, but are dwarfed by the local capital strength of the multinational companies and are also moderate in international comparison. Secondly - and more importantly - the procedural guarantees of parliamentary democracy have worked so far. They are not working perfectly well, though. It did happen that a business group influenced legislation for its benefits, that politicians drew business profit from parliamentary decisions and, as many claim, the law of incompatibility is also too slack compared to the possibilities. It is, however, a rare charge by analysts and critics that the parliamentary rules are mere decor, simply a facade to hide the sharing of the booty by oligarchs, politicians and background institutions behind it. This tendency has little probability here for the above reason. Cross-segmental careers are not signs of a crisis by themselves: between 1897 and 1973 two-thirds of the American ministers had experience in business (Freitag 1975). Besides, international obligations and bonds considerably demarcate the scope of an elite's mobility towards extremities, including a possible bent for norm-breaching behaviour.

It seems however that some of the current signs of crises are strongly related to the elite framework, and are rooted in the failure of (or vague) *representative* linkage. It appears in recruitment – which has become frozen. It appears in accountability – in the growing

distance between society and elite. The political elite is not aware of the importance of the question: who to respond? The roots of (fake) *accountability* lie elsewhere – in cemented power positions. It appears in *leadership* - in fear of their lack of legitimacy (the main source for a democratic elite to feel safe and thus have to courage to “lead”) they do not focus on policy and regime performance but in on intra-elite conflicts and fights.

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# THE CHARACTER OF ELITES AND STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS: SLOVENIA AND ESTONIA IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Frane Adam, Matevž Tomšič and Primož Kristan

## Introduction: Composition of the elite in transition countries

One characteristic of post-socialist political elites is their heterogeneity. Namely, they are made up of individuals and groups with various social and historical origins and ideological orientations: former dissidents with diverse roots, more or less reformist members of the ex-communist nomenclature, members of professional groups (so-called technocrats), people from the sphere of the Church and even some members of pre-war political elites.<sup>17</sup> According to Agh, the transitional political elite possesses a number of common characteristics such as its distance from the non-elite and a lack of professionalism. For this reason, society perceives it as a unified actor which »monopolises politics and exerts control over all social life« (Agh 1996: 45). But several antagonisms and conflicts exist among the various elite segments, especially the competition for control over key resources which the actors are trying to obtain through different social linkages (the search for allies, various 'coalitions'); all of this means we are not dealing with a uniform group.

The social conditions in the countries of the former communist bloc are largely characterised by the *relationship between so-called old and new elites*; i.e., between elites coming from the ranks of the former regime and the relatively heterogeneous elites formed during the process of system transition. It must, however, be stressed that it is often difficult to make a clear-cut division between the old and new elites. Even the former nomenclature has in fact experienced various transformations and part of it has embraced (at least formally) democratic principles and norms, thus the thought and action patterns which are essentially a relic of the former undemocratic system are often found in recently-founded political parties.

Nevertheless, a key question of post-socialist transformations concerns the position and role of the former holders of monopolistic social power such as the members of former communist elites: in other words, whether and to what extent they were able to retain key social resources and thereby continue to influence the development of these societies. In view of this, there are

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<sup>17</sup> Attila Agh defines the five characteristic transitional types of politician: politicians of morality, politicians of historical vision, politicians of coincidence, the old nomenclature and the emerging professional political elite. For more details, see Agh (1996).



two interpretations of post-socialist conditions. The theory of elite reproduction holds that changes in Central and Eastern Europe did not have an impact on the composition of elites since the nomenclature was able to stay at the top of the social structure and become the new grand *bourgeoisie*. According to Hankiss (1990), the communist elites (at least their 'reformed' parts) used their political capital to acquire economic assets (through processes like 'spontaneous privatisation'). During the transition process, the *nomenclature* managed to stay in its positions because it succeeded in a particularly rapid conversion (Matonyte/Mink 2003). The socio-economic structure of post-communist societies is thus argued to be designed according to the needs of this elite, described in terms like 'political capitalism' (Staniszki 1991) or 'crony capitalism' (Hanley 2000). According to the theory of elite circulation, however, these transformations are brought about by structural changes at the top of the social hierarchy, i.e., the key positions occupied by new people on the basis of new principles (Szelenyi/Szelenyi 1995: 616).

Yet in some interpretations the findings of empirical research do not categorically corroborate either the theory of reproduction or the theory of circulation (see Szelenyi/Szelenyi 1995: 636).<sup>18</sup> It is evident that in the process of post-socialist transition no revolutionary changes occurred in this region in general. Thus, part of the old elite – mainly its bureaucratic faction – left the elite, although a large part of the elite of the late 1980s retained their key positions. On the other hand, a large share of post-socialist elites is made up of people who did not belong to the nomenclature. However, with these new members usually no great 'structural shifts' occurred since most of them came from the ranks of professionals and mid-level bureaucracy, i.e., those who at the end of the 1980s wielded at least some power (ibid.: 622-624).

The reproduction of elites in Russia is understandable since the social changes in that country occurred more slowly, were less fundamental and no strong counter-elite had existed that could have pushed the communist party personnel out. Thus, in the conditions of relative social instability, where democratic institutions do not function properly, communist party personnel have the advantage over the new players. In the cases of Hungary and Poland, the principle of the circulation of elites holds greater weight.<sup>19</sup> This can be accounted for by the

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<sup>18</sup> A lengthy international comparative study of national elites (which formed part of the research project 'Social Stratification in Eastern Europe') was conducted in several countries of the post-socialist transition in the 1990-94 period. It was carried out by Ivan Szelenyi and his colleagues and initiated in 1990. By mid-1994, surveys had been completed in six countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Russia.

<sup>19</sup> Wasilewski's 1998 study of the current Polish elite (573 interviews were conducted with representatives of political, administrative and economic elites) gives somewhat different results in terms of the reproduction of the Polish elite: among the new elite, supposedly over a quarter (27%) of those belonged to the elite during the communist rule. According to the author, this share represents a 'significant reproduction of the old elite' (Wasilewski 1999: 4).

relatively well-developed civil societies there (in comparison to Russia) and a strong political counter-elite, which defeated the former communists in the first free elections.

A research study of the profile of the national elite was also conducted in the Czech Republic. The results indicate that, in terms of the economic elite, the level of reproduction is quite high while, in terms of political, administrative and cultural elites, we can speak of circulation (Srubar 1998).<sup>20</sup> One should also mention here a comparative study of national elites carried out in the Baltic countries which concludes that with the Baltic elites there is a combination of continuity and change. Here, A. Steen, the author of the study, uses the term 'elite recirculation' (Steen 1997).<sup>21</sup>

It is thus evident that the configuration of national elites, meaning the relative position and size of various elite circles in the constellation of power (Dogan 2003a: 1), differs considerably from one post-socialist country to another, and the same is true for the balance between the reproduction and circulation of elites. It is precisely the balance and relations among the recently emerged factions of the post-socialist elite that decisively determine the character of political regimes (primarily in terms of the division of power in society, i.e., the level of its dispersal or concentration, as well as in terms of the social order as a whole). The types of elites in post-socialist societies differ from one another in a similar way as do the configurations of elites. The character of a political system in fact depends largely on the type of relations among the various political elites (Field et al. 1990; Higley/Burton 1998). This is particularly true in the case of a system transformation in which elites play the role of institution-builders (Kaminski/Kurczewska 1994).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> 40% of the Czech transitional economic elite occupied elite positions before 1989. Of these 40%, 85% were ex-communist party members, while 57% of the new economic elite were former communist party members (the percentage of 'party members' in the economic elite is considerably greater than the percentages in the political and cultural elites). In current managerial structures, only 23% of managers in fact held general manager positions before 1989, however, 50% of them were at that time deputy general managers or members of the board of directors (i.e., they belonged to some kind of second-rank managerial staff). 30% of the cultural elite held elite positions during communism. The results are similar in the case of the political elite, thus displaying a relatively low level of continuity. 35% of members of the new political elite used to be communist party members (Srubar 1998).

<sup>21</sup> The proportion of the elites who were members of the Communist Party and who held high positions in the former regime are: 55% in Latvia, 54% in Estonia and in 44% Lithuania (Steen 1997: 158). One reason for the smaller proportion of ex-Communist Party members in the new Lithuanian elites may lie in the more pronounced left-right political cleavage (which has stimulated a more critical focus on the past), while in the case of the other two countries ethnic cleavages between the indigenous and Russophone populations were prevalent. In Estonia and Latvia, an intensive de-Russification of the elites occurred, meaning that the ethnicity of candidates for elite positions was more important than their political background.

<sup>22</sup> In their classification, Higley, Pakulski and Wesolowski specify four types of political elites on the basis of two factors: the level of integration and differentiation of elites: consensual, fragmented, divided and ideocratic elites.<sup>22</sup> In countries with a consensual elite (Visegrad countries, Baltic countries, Slovenia) where all the key political players abide by the rules and where a relative balance of power between different factions of political elite exists, the entrenchment of long-term political stability is most likely. However, in most countries of the former Soviet Union, of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and in Albania, where there is practically no consensus on the fundamental norms of political activity, a specific part of the political

However, it should be pointed out that consensus and quasi-solidarity among political elites could lead to clientelism and the irresponsibility for national development on the part of these elites. There are even some examples from developed Western democracies that testify to this. The problem is not only a lack of elite integration but also the elite overlapping and interlocking or even colonisation of the elite sector by one of its sectors.<sup>23</sup> It enhances elitism in the sense of a lack of responsiveness and responsibility towards the citizens. The convergence between political and civil society elites, coupled with a missing link between leaders and the masses in both politics and civil society which is, some say, characteristic of post-communist societies (Korkut 2005) hampers the development of democratic political life and a vibrant civil sphere. In this light, the relationship between consensus, conflict and competition should be re-defined.

The majority of research on elites in post-socialist societies has generally been of a descriptive nature and focused on formal positions and characteristics (Bozoki 2003). At the same time, it offers empirical evidence for further elaboration and stimulates criticism and new investigations. Our review of the evidence on the formation and dynamics of positional elites in post-socialist societies clearly indicates there is neither pure reproduction nor pure circulation, but we can speak of a greater inclination to one or other form in these countries. For the cases of Slovenia, the most economically developed, and Estonia, the fastest developing, post-communist country we will seek to more precisely define these mixed forms, for example, the relations between reproduction and circulation, and their consequences for political modernisation<sup>24</sup> and socio-economic development.

### Elites and political dynamics

Besides being former communist countries, Slovenia and Estonia share several similar characteristics. First, they are both small countries in terms of the size of their territory and

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elite is explicitly dominant. Accordingly, the chances of successful political transformation, meaning the establishment of a stable polyarchical democracy (as well as the reforming of the remaining societal spheres), are relatively small, at least in the near future.

<sup>23</sup> In France, researchers stress the central role of the bureaucratic faction of the national elite which dominates not only political life but sometimes even the business sphere since people from the top of the state administration frequently assume positions of CEOs in big companies (Dogan 2003b). Some signs of the bureaucratisation of big business are also observed in Germany (Scheuch 2003), indicating the growing role of political and administrative elites.

<sup>24</sup> Here we understand modernisation as a complex process of social changes in various fields (politics, the economy, science etc.) in the function of catching up with the so-called developmental core, meaning those states perceived to be the most developed. From the viewpoint of post-socialist states, such a referential framework mainly comprises the most developed member states of the European Union.

number of inhabitants. Second, they are new countries that gained independence only after the collapse of communist regimes. (In the case of Estonia, independence was, in fact, regained since it was a sovereign country in the period between two World Wars.) Third, they were the most economically developed regions in former multi-national settings (although Slovenia was at a considerably higher level in this regard) with the most Western contacts due to their geographical closeness to Western Europe: Slovenia borders Austria and Italy and Estonia has a maritime border with Finland.

However, the nature of the communist regimes in these two countries differed considerably in some aspects. The Slovenian regime was, in general, much more open and Slovenia enjoyed more regional autonomy, while with Estonia the oppressiveness of the Soviet regime remained strong up until the beginning of *perestroika* and Estonians were exposed to a severe process of Russification – the result of which was about one-third of Estonia's population were Russian-speaking people (who mostly settled during the Soviet period) at the time of establishing the country's independence.

The two new EU members, despite the abovementioned similarities, experienced different dynamics of their systemic transformation. They established varying types of socio-economic regulation and different institutional settings which consequently determined the results of the transition process. Our analysis intends to show how these differences were determined partly by the logic of 'path-dependence' or, in other words, the conditions at the start of the transition process as well as by the character of the main actors, namely the elites, especially political ones, the relations between them and their strategic choices. In the following part of the text, we will briefly outline political developments in both countries in the post-communist period, the elite configurations and their consequences for socio-economic development.

### *Slovenia*

The Slovenian political space is characterised by a bipolar division into two political blocs. The first is the so-called 'left-liberal' and the second the so-called 'right' bloc, with neither being fully internally homogenous. They can be most clearly divided regarding their institutional origins. The main two parties of the first camp – the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) and the Social Democrats (SD) (until 2005 the United List of Social Democrats) have their organisational roots in the old (socialist) regime – the latter is the

successor to the former ruling Communist Party.<sup>25</sup> The other bloc consists of three main parties – the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) which is the dominant party here, the Slovenian People's Party (SLS) and New Slovenia (NSi) – which were established during the process of democratisation. The distinction between the 'old' and 'new' parties as they are often labelled in public discourse largely covers the left-right cleavage ('left' as the 'old' and 'right' as the 'new' parties).<sup>26</sup> At first, the cleavage mostly referred to the positions of the two camps in the past, meaning both the period between the two world wars and the communist period as well as to some other positions of a symbolic and ideological nature like the role of religion and the Catholic Church in society. (In this regard, the 'left' takes a quite lenient attitude to the communist period while it is sceptical and not rejective of the public engagement of the Church, while the 'right' is strongly critical of communism yet relatively supportive of the Church). While this 'cultural war' still has some potential for political mobilisation (although it has declined in the last few years), the issue of socio-economic regulation is gaining in importance and becoming the main point of controversy since the new government, mostly comprising parties of the 'right', has launched a comprehensive programme of social and economic reforms directed at liberalisation and de-etatisation that should enhance the competitiveness and innovativeness of the Slovenian economy and society at large. These reforms are encountering considerable reluctance on the part of the opposition (especially the LDS) which warns against an increase in social inequality and the impoverishment of a considerable share of the population – meaning it is demonstrating its 'leftist nature' in terms of its social orientation and scepticism of 'unleashed' capitalism.

The victory of the 'right' in the last parliamentary elections (in 2004) brought a major change to the constellation of political forces. For most of the post-communist period, the Slovenian political space was dominated by a 'left-liberal' bloc in which the LDS played a central part. From the first parliamentary elections in 1990 onwards, there were five 'political turns' (including the establishment of the first non-communist government in 1990, and the current one), in other words, changes of the political options in power (and five different heads of government, including the current one). However, in this (14-year) period governments not dominated by 'left-liberal' parties were in place for just two and a half years. Although all

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<sup>25</sup> It has to be mentioned that the LDS acquired some special features. Regarding the origin of its membership it is quite a heterogeneous party. Its dominant core originates from the former Socialist Youth Organisation which, in the second half of the 1980s, became ever more critical of the regime; it can be said that it was an opposition within the (communist) party and its members had contacts with dissident circles (opposition outside the communist party). In 1994, a small but very significant section of members of two parties from the new political elite (members of the Demos coalition that governed from 1990 to 1992) joined the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia.

<sup>26</sup> The labelling of both political blocs as 'the left' (first camp) and 'the right' (second camp) which is usual in public discourse has been a paradox for a long time (and to some extent it has blurred the picture of the Slovenian political space) since members of the business elite belong to proponents of 'the left', mostly the LDS, while many of those who considered themselves de-privileged (which is often described in terms of injustices suffered under the communist regime) have supported 'the right'.

LDS-led governments were composed of parties from different camps, this party dominated them and the ‘spring parties’ only played a marginal role in these coalitions.

The political domination of the ‘left-liberal’ bloc was strongly related to the configuration of the general elite in post-communist Slovenia. Research conducted in 1995 on Slovenian functional elites in politics, culture and the business sector<sup>27</sup> provided some data on the relations between the old (people who occupied high positions before 1988 and were able to preserve them) and the new elites (those assuming elite positions after 1988). In fact, this showed a fairly high level of reproduction in all elite sectors (the highest in the business sector),<sup>28</sup> much higher than in other comparable Central European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) where the change in the regime resulted in fundamental changes to the elite positions and thus the circulation of elites was higher. The consequence was that the vast majority of the elite gravitated (regarding its voting preferences) towards the political part of the retention elite, represented by the LDS and SD. This faction of the political elite had much better connections with various strategic groups within society, above all the management, business and academic sphere, the social sciences circles and the media. Its advantage thus laid in its intellectual and cadre potential as well as financial resources, which led to its disproportionate influence and informal power within society. This informal power contributed to the dominance of ‘the left’ more than their legitimate power, i.e. support among the population, since both blocs were more or less in balance up until the parliamentary elections in 2000 (when the LDS and left bloc won with a large majority).

## Estonia

The political space in post-communist Estonia has been characterised by the fact that, unlike in most other Central and Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Lithuania), the former communist elite did not manage to politically survive, at least not in the form of a strong communist successor party. Moreover, there is no strong left in Estonian political life. Among the political parties currently represented in parliament, only one – the smallest of six parliamentary parties (the Social Democratic Party, the former People’s Party Moderates) –

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<sup>27</sup> It should be stated that, regarding the research on elites in Slovenia carried out in 1995, a positional determination of the elites was performed. In this context, individuals are part of an elite if they occupy key positions in three main social areas: in politics (e.g. ministers, representatives in parliament, high state administrators, party leaders), in the economy (managers in leading companies) and in the cultural sphere (leading staff in cultural and scientific institutions, media establishments and professional associations).

<sup>28</sup> The rate of reproduction amounts on average to 77%, with the highest individual level being seen in the business sector (84%) and the lowest in politics (66%), while in culture it reaches 78% (Kramberger 1998, 1999; Iglič/Rus 2000).

may be considered to be centre-leftist-oriented.<sup>29</sup> The others are labelled centrist or centre-rightist.<sup>30</sup> This means that it is mostly liberal and conservative forces competing for political support and an exchange in positions of political power. (However, at the elections for the European Parliament in 2004 the Social Democrats won the largest share of votes, which might indicate a certain change in the configuration of the Estonian political space).

Estonian political life has been characterised by high political dynamics in terms of the frequent changes of power-holders. Since 1990 there have been eleven governments and eight different people have headed up the government (the longest duration of government was three years – between 1999 and 2002 when it was led by Mart Laar). Most governments have been centre-rightist-oriented. Only one prime minister can be declared a social democrat (Andres Tarand, then not a party affiliate but who later led the Moderates) but even the government he led was not left-centre-oriented in general because the coalition parties come from centrist and centre-rightist political options.

It is obvious that Estonian politics is, notwithstanding the quite frequent change of governments, dominated by a conservative-liberal option (Vogt 2003). This relates to the configuration of elites which has experienced the considerable circulation of the key positions. This circulation was, as mentioned before, not very 'deep' meaning that (mostly the younger) people recruited to the elite positions have not been complete newcomers since they occupied positions of some importance even at the end of the communist period (Steen 1997; Steen/Ruus 2002).<sup>31</sup> However, this influences the ideological composition of the political sphere and society at large since the vast majority of them embrace a neo-liberal ideology.

Although Estonia has had, at least in the first years of its independence, considerable continuity in terms of the communist pedigree of the political elite, this has not had an impact on the rightist character of the political space.<sup>32</sup> One of the authors, on the other side, in his

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<sup>29</sup> But even the orientation of this party seems to bear some traits of the New Labour (Lagerspetz/Vogt 2004: 65) and is thus not similar to the classical social-democratic parties.

<sup>30</sup> The Centre Party received the highest number of votes in the last parliamentary election and is labelled by some as 'left leaning' (Pettai 2004: 993). However, it is a member of the European Liberal, Democratic and Reform Party. The Estonian People's Union is also sometimes described as a 'left of centre' party, which refers to its more left-oriented (by Estonian standards) social and economics policies advocating more state regulation and subsidising. However, in cultural terms it is conservatively oriented, proclaiming national and traditional values. This demonstrates how difficult it is for many post-communist parties to be located in the categories of 'left' and 'right'. As observed by some political analysts, the classical left-right cleavage has not yet evolved in Estonian political life (Grofman et al., 2001).

<sup>31</sup> As stated by Steen, 'While the nomenclature was largely removed from power, the younger, well educated, mid-level leaders from the former regime are continuing and are now occupying most of the top positions' (Steen 1997: 166).

<sup>32</sup> As stated by Ruus and Taru in their study of members of the Riigikogu (Estonian parliament): 'A majority of all Estonian MPs have right-wing orientations, and consequently, previous membership of the Communist Party has only a minor impact on leftist attitudes' (Ruus /Taru 2003: 67).

recent study argues that the elites' strong rightist orientations are levelling out or even declining (Steen 2007).<sup>33</sup> What is surprising here is the notion that the state option for resolving traditional collective problems found strong support among all elite groups in the period between 1994 and 2003. Considering Estonia's low healthcare expenditure and its falling rate of total expenditure on social protection, a return to the state option seems very unlikely. In fact, even political parties belonging to the left side of the Estonian political spectrum are clearly pro-market, so much so that in many countries they might qualify as steadfast right-wingers (Vogt 2003: 83). A change in ideological affiliation also occurred with some top functionaries of the former regime. A typical example is Arnold Ruutel, the former president of the republic who was the last president of the Supreme Soviet of Estonia but later became a leading figure of one new political party (the Estonian People's Union) that claims to represent national-conservative values. Evidently the position in the former regime's power structure did not determine ideological preferences in the post-communist situation as happened in some other countries like Slovenia.

### *Left-wing and right-wing hegemony*

One could say that both Slovenia and Estonia have for most of the post-communist period been characterised by politico-ideological hegemony. What differs is the content and bearer of this hegemony. While in Slovenia it was undertaken by a 'leftist-liberal' camp (Adam/Tomsic 2002) and oriented toward gradualism, in Estonia it was conducted by a conservative-liberal option and directed at radical change in the sense of the liberalisation of society (Lagerspetz 2001; Lagerspetz/Vogt 2004). Hegemony in Slovenia was maintained in conditions of a bipolar structure of the political space, even though the electoral support for both camps was often quite in balance, mainly through informal elite networks. Hegemony in Estonia was, despite the absence of a dominant political entity and the relative fragmentation of the political space, maintained through a wide value and policy consensus of the main political actors.

It seems that the presence of an 'external threat' in the form of Russia as a strong neighbour and former oppressor as well as the large Russophone population acted as a homogeniser of

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<sup>33</sup> In a study of elites' beliefs and economic reforms in the Baltic states and Russia (280-315 face-to-face interviews with top leaders – parliamentary deputies, administrative officials, directors of major private companies and state enterprises, NGO leaders, the judiciary, culture institutions and local government – were conducted in every state and combined with the World Bank and IMF statistical material), Steen comes to the conclusion that '...the elites' rightist orientations were strong during the initial phase of reforms and are fairly stable during the 1994-2003 period. The elite support for private ownership was extremely high at the beginning among all elite groups but is apparently declining gradually as the effects of capitalism, e.g. income inequality hits the population. The state option for solving traditional collective problems has strong support among all elite groups during the entire period' (Steen 2007: 96).



Estonian elites on the basis of a national and neo-liberal ideological platform. In the case of Slovenia, the absence of such a strong ongoing threat (despite the fact that its ex-Yugoslav neighbours were at war) prevented such homogenisation. Instead, the so-called 'soft transition' with the important role of the 'old' elite which managed to stay in many key positions in society, combined with traditions of strong ideological polarisation, maintained the state of a bipolar constellation and the domination of one political bloc.

The composition of Slovenian elites and dynamics of the political space has been the subject of dispute among scholars. Some consider this situation to be unproblematic, stressing the benign effect of elite reproduction, especially political and social stability – Slovenia experienced less social turbulence than any other transition country – while at the same time relativising the significance of the data indicates a high level of elite continuity (Iglič/Rus 2000; Kramberger/Vehovar 2000) or attributing that to the positive role of the old communist elite in the democratisation process (Miheljak/Toš 2005). However, other more critical interpretations exist, including those advocated by the authors of this article (Adam/Tomsic 2000, 2002; Tomsic 2002). According to them, the high level of elite reproduction is producing a long-term malignant effect (although this might not be apparent in the short term), including a possible shift towards an oligarchic democracy or delegative democracy (see O'Donnell 1998), and the establishment of monopolies and rent-seeking behaviour.

Similarly, assessments of Estonian political development are not univocal. It is generally accepted that the country achieved great progress in the last fifteen years in terms of the development of its economy, society and political life. The tempo of its systemic modernisation is probably the fastest in the region and is thus often labelled the 'model pupil' of the applicants for EU accession (Smith 2002). For this achievement, the political actors in this period certainly deserve credit. In spite of this, certain observers detect some considerable deficiencies characterising Estonian politics and society like the increasing social inequality, political egotism and a lack of responsibility, widespread clientelism etc.<sup>34</sup> The main problem perceived is the elitist behaviour of political leaders and their insensitivity to the interests and preferences of ordinary people.<sup>35</sup> The differing experience of certain social and ethnic groups results in polarised assessments of the democratic process in terms of their satisfaction with the state of democracy (Evans/Lipsmeyer 2001).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> In April 2001, a group of Estonian social researchers addressed the public in an appeal raising their concerns about the course of the country's development. In their view, Estonia had drifted into a political, social and ethical crisis. They described the notion of 'Two Estonias, which symbolise a wide gap between power elite and disempowered ordinary citizens' (Lagerspetz/Vogt 2004: 57).

<sup>35</sup> This elite-centeredness, based on the principles of speed, efficiency and expertise, is argued to also be characteristic of the process of Estonia's integration into the European Union (Raik 2002).

<sup>36</sup> In their analysis, the two authors conclude that the gap between ethnic Estonians and Russian-speaking ones is narrowing after initial differences and the so-called two groups' status. Considering the data from 1990 to 1996, findings on the development of trust in the two ethnic communities indicate 'considerable progress toward the

## **State-society relations**

### *The strength of civil society*

Numerous definitions of civil society exist, yet most of them agree (are compatible) with the notion that civil society represents an intermediary sphere, some kind of buffer-zone between individuals' micro worlds and big institutions (Berger/Luckmann 1995). In this respect the intermediary sphere is constructed from a string of organisations and associations that we add to the so-called Third- or nonprofit-voluntary sector. This sphere is important from a democracy point of view, as well as for the sustainability of social cohesion. Its development indicates a tension towards the self-organisation and activity of the citizens. On the other hand, some segments of civil society are included in decision- and policy-making processes. This in fact means that connections exist between the political elite and the leadership of civic associations or NGOs. Here we encounter differences among particular states, in some cases civil society is more included in social and civic dialogue, while in other cases it is less so or detached (pushed away) from the main decisions and therefore not presented with social acknowledgment.

Regarding the relevance and development of civil society in Estonia and Slovenia there are some comparative data available, however it is difficult to create a general picture of respective relations on the basis of these data. Findings of cross-national studies show that Slovenia has a more developed civil society that is seemingly more greatly included in public policies.

Let us take a look at some findings from the European Values Study (1999-2000). On the basis of data about membership and activity in voluntary organisations, it is evident that in Estonia in the period between 1990 and 1999 a significant decrease in participation occurred. In 1990, 73% of respondents were included in voluntary associations, whereas nine years later only 34% were. Similar is the proportion in active participation that also dropped by one-half. This can be explained as a transition shock that caused serious social turbulences. Yet, concerning Slovenia, the trend is the opposite. In 1990, civil society was weaker than in

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creation of a homogeneous civil society' (Titma/Raemmer 2007). According to this analysis, differences between the groups are overcome by similarities resulting in the fact that 'the Estonians' feel less threatened by the Russian-speaking minority every year.' Surprisingly, this conclusion is drawn in despite of the noted (significant) difference between the two groups in relation to the poverty issue. For example, namely 85% of Russians as opposed to 54% of Estonians believe that poor people have very little chance to escape from the poverty gap (Ibid.).

Estonia, however the last measurement shows progress and the mean scores are much better. Consequently, together with the Czech Republic and Slovakia Slovenia constitutes a relatively successful group in the European context. Estonia on the other side, falling into the group of countries with a less developed civil society (together with Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Portugal and Spain) that are only better than the average of Russia and Turkey. Similar results can be drawn from the so-called global civil society index that is based on variables or data from the EVS (Anheier/Stares 2002).

We need to be sceptical of these data since they do not allow any firm conclusions. Besides the methodological problems that comparative research in Europe is dealing with, the issue is also the remote time period since the transition has been proceeding towards its completion in the last three years. In both countries political and economic stability has been accomplished as well as a higher standard of living. In the last Eurobarometer survey (Special Eurobarometer 237 'European Social Reality') conducted in 2006-2007, we can observe the noticeable progress of Estonia regarding the extent of active participation or voluntary work in the EU. Estonia, still being below the European average, is positioned considerably higher than most new EU members. Slovenia (close behind are the Czech Republic and Slovakia) is positioned higher, slightly above the EU average.

Based on this data and considering other findings<sup>37</sup> we hypothesise that organised civil society in both countries is gaining in importance, however in general it is still playing a relatively weak role as a partner to the political elite.

Relation between state and civil society in Estonia is regulated by Civil Society Development Concept, adopted by state parliament (Riigikogu) in 2002 and presents the basis for communication between the state and NGOs. High hopes were put into this agreement regarding consolidation of weak Estonian third sector organizations and improvement of cooperation with state authorities (Kirch 2002). Estonia's liberal character is evident also in some other laws and regulations, as for example, the Law of General Principles of the Civil Code (guarantees the right of associations to have their own regulations with general norms established by LGPCC), broad restrictions enforced by the government, granting freedom of association, are embedded in Estonian Constitution that serves as the basis for regulation of NGO sector. Separated are also laws for foundations and non-profit organizations. Estonia law is one of the most comprehensive in the Central European region. It has developed a traditional civil law structure for its non-profit organizations and has permitted related

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<sup>37</sup> One foreign author observing Estonian political life and the role of civil society during the accession negotiations with the EU speaks about the strong prevalence of civil servants and the government, and stresses the technocratic elite-centred decision-making.

business activities by its foundations. In Slovenia however, the role of the state in this regard is considered unsupportive, at least from the perspective of some NGO representatives. Slovenian NGOs are striving for an agreement with the government that would regulate issues of financial support, taxation, employment subventions, partnership with the state, etc. For this purpose, Initiative for the future of NGOs formed a proposition of dialogue with the government on a national conference on 17.12.2003. Current governmental position is against of such an agreement (law), however instead of official document these issues are to be incorporated into governmental policy in strategic form (source: CNVOS). On the other side, according to our pilot study of contacts between Slovenian NGOs and other social actors conducted in 2007, NGOs relation with the government is among strongest of all relations.

In Slovenia, its influence is more pronounced and we can also conclude that there are more connections and co-operation between civil society and politics (which is not necessarily positive due to the possibility of the emergence of rent-seeking behaviour or ‘special interest groups’ as argued by M. Olson).

#### *Liberal vs. corporatist state regulation*

Our thesis is that the Estonian elite created the type of state which is close to the model of a liberal minimalist state whereas its Slovenian counterpart produced a model close to the corporatist welfare state. Much of the empirical evidence confirms this. Regarding healthcare expenditure, in 2003 Estonia with 4.2% of GDP was only placed higher than Lithuania (3.9%) and Latvia (3.0%) but Slovenia spent almost twice as much (7.8%), while other figures are Czech Republic (7.1%), Hungary (6.2%), Slovakia (5.8%) and Poland (4.3%). Total expenditure on social protection in Estonia dropped from 14.4% of GDP in 2000, 13.6% of GDP in 2001, 13.2% of GDP in 2002 to 13.4% of GDP in 2003 (source: Eurostat Yearbook 2006-07).

Some recent data show that satisfaction with the standard of living and the quality of life is much higher in Slovenia than in Estonia, despite the outright positive mood of the Estonians, according to the Eurobarometer data. Considering the percentage share of respondents satisfied with the standard of living and the quality of life, Slovenia is ranked equal or even above the EU-25 average, whereas Estonia stays well below it.<sup>38</sup> Social protection, in particular health care, is another issue of concern among 53% of Estonians, whereas only 29% of respondents are concerned in Slovenia (also see Eurobarometer 2007). It should be, however, stressed that according to this survey Estonians are the most optimistic and future-

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<sup>38</sup> Regarding satisfaction with ‘the quality of life in the areas where you live’ 90% of Slovenians’ as opposed to 78% of Estonians answered in the affirmative. In the case of the ‘standard of living’, the relation is 83% (Slovenia) and 68% (Estonia). The EU-25 average is 86% (‘quality of life’) and 83% for ‘standard of living’ (Special EB 2007).

oriented nation in the EU. Regarding the socio-economic situation in the next twelve months as well as in the next five years, they expect substantial improvements.

Regarding the labour market, the development of institutional regulative mechanisms also differs in both countries. After the initial decline seen in union membership associated with the transformational recession, institutional changes and sectoral reallocations, unions have become more homogenous organisations and genuine representatives of sectoral interests, which has also led to the fragmentation of union structures and the rise of new specialised unions (Feldman 2006). The representation of workers' interests in Slovenia is well-developed and institutionally co-ordinated, whereas in Estonia labour unions play no significant role, particularly not in wage bargaining. Collective bargaining is the most important factor in determining wages in Slovenia, leaving only a small manoeuvring space for employers to regulate wages according to their business interests and the labour market situation. The minimum wage is being set by negotiations between employers and labour unions, whereas enactment lies in the domain of the competent minister (Ivančič 2007). Legal employment protection in Slovenia is the highest among the Central and Eastern European transition countries.<sup>39</sup> In Estonia, the legal protection of permanent employment as well as protection from collective dismissal is basically almost at the same level as in Slovenia, however a national report for Estonia (2007) accentuates the mere formality of the legal protection since many employers systematically violate legal regulations by exerting pressure on employees to register themselves as self-employed and thus reduce the cost of wages (Ivančič 2007). The government's interference in wages paid by the business sector is limited and confined to the establishment of minimum wages and adherence to the provisions of the wages law, which mainly means that 'the employees as the weaker party in the labour market are given internationally acknowledged guarantees' (Alas/Svetlik 2004). According to Alas and Svetlik, the Estonian government regulates the wages of only about 10% of the employees.

In economic theory, two distinctive models or patterns of economic co-ordination, namely co-ordinated market economies (CME)<sup>40</sup> and liberal market economies (LME)<sup>41</sup>, are linked to

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<sup>39</sup> The legal employment protection index (EPL, OECD 1999) for Slovenia is 3.5, for Hungary 1.7 and for Estonia 2.6 (Ivančič 2007).

<sup>40</sup> 'In CMEs willingness to invest in industry-specific skills is present. This is backed up by a financial system, which is able to provide firms with 'patient' capital. Investments are monitored through close relationships to stakeholders in dense business networks and cross-ownership with overall large blockholders of shares. This longer-term investment horizon, in turn, makes it possible for firms to retain workers in economic downturns. Otherwise no worker would be willing to invest in industry or even firm-specific assets. Furthermore, this relationship is corroborated by a generous social security system and more consensual industrial relations, which combined give workers additional employment and unemployment protection, as well as "wage protection". So the comparative institutional advantage of these firms is their ability to invest in firm-specific or industry specific skills (assets). These skills are actually "produced" by the dual vocational training, as in Germany, where apprentices acquire a great deal of practical firm experience. Encompassing business associations and

Slovenia and Estonia. Feldman (2006) argues that the emergence of either type of industrial relations in both countries can be understood by examining the inherited institutions (legacies) and strategic policy choices regarding privatisation and monetary policy (strategic policies). Legacies determine the emerging institutions in the transition period and differ sharply between Slovenia and Estonia. Thus, for example, the decentralised institution of workers' self-management (horizontal ties) in former Yugoslavia, as opposed to the centralised Soviet system of political control over economic affairs, resulted in a different role and extent of trade union involvement and privatisation. Considering the privatisation policy choices, the new elites in Estonia leaned heavily on foreign investment, which significantly weakened the old interests and workers' influence (Feldman 2006).

### *Elitism in relations between the state and civil society*

In post-communist countries, there is the dominant position of the state *vis-à-vis* civil society (Korkut, 2005). This is caused by the exclusivist way of conducting in the hands of political elites (Agh, 1996) as well as the structural conditions of the functioning of the civil sphere, i.e. its weakness in terms of its personal, financial and organisational resources (Nagle and Mahr, 1999; Ost, 1993; 2000). Moreover, the societies are characterised by the elitism of both politics and civil society. Reasons for this can be found in: 1. the convergence of political and civil society elites (their interconnectedness in terms of strong – albeit often informal – ties between elite members); and 2). the missing link between leaders and masses in both political and civic associations (Korkut, 2005:149). This leaves ordinary citizens out of political and social life.

As regards our two countries under comparison, one can speak about two types of elitism. Estonia is characterised by (neo)liberal elitism where interest groups are relatively weak and political influence is thus exercised on a predominantly individualist basis, while in Slovenia a (neo)corporatist elitism involving the overlapping and interlocking of political and non-political elites prevails. Both types contribute to the exclusion of 'unconnected' individuals and groups who cannot effectively participate in decision-making processes.

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relatively close relationships between firms make this possible through common standard-setting and prevention of free-riding' (Buchens 2005).

<sup>41</sup> 'On the contrary, for firms in LMEs access to capital is through highly liquid markets. Shareholders rely on takeovers as disciplining measures. Capital markets demand disclosure of short-term profitability figures. This, in turn, is ensured by fast hire-and-fire. Wages are negotiated on the firm level. Workers will invest in more portable assets, general skills. Low unemployment and employment protection reinforce this. So, in contrast to CMEs, in LMEs comparative institutional advantage of firms operating in this highly competitive environment lies within their high degree of flexibility' (Ibid.)

It can be stated that political hegemony, regardless of its ideological basis, produces some problematic effects for the proper functioning of democracy in terms of the fairness and openness of the political process with a continuous interaction between elites and the citizenry since it leads to the self-sufficiency of power-holders and a lack of responsiveness towards the citizenry.

## Discussion and conclusion

The course of political development and systemic transition is determined to some extent by 'path-dependence'. After the breakdown of the Soviet regime, Estonia faced some serious socio-economic conditions. It had a choice: to either stay trapped in a vicious circle of under-achievement at the Western periphery or to do something to break this circle and make a developmental breakthrough. Slovenia's situation was quite different. Its relative openness towards the West and its more market-oriented economy together with some degree of political and especially cultural autonomy (which was not the case in the Baltic countries) during the times of socialist Yugoslavia made the change in the socio-economic formation less traumatic. This led to the prevalence of a notion of the relative compatibility of the Slovenian institutional setting with the West which rejected a deep and sudden break with the past, arguing for a 'soft transition', in other words, piecemeal and gradual institutional changes in order to preserve social stability. This soft transition was strongly connected with the abovementioned high elite reproduction, meaning that most old communist-era elites retained their positions in the new circumstances. However, the political actors still had to make their choices. The Estonian elite decided to modernise society through a widespread and rapid liberalisation and deregulation, while the Slovenian one embraced a gradualist approach that led to much slower and more cautious reforms.

Both transition models have proved to be successful. Estonia is considered to be the fastest-developing state that is rapidly approaching the EU average. Slovenia, on the other hand, has succeeded in maintaining the highest GDP in the region – despite having lower economic growth than Estonia – and economic stability, which enabled the acceptance of the common European currency – the euro – (becoming the only new EU member state to do so). Here, two key factors need to be mentioned. The first refers to the structural, particularly historical and geo-political circumstances (path-dependence). The second has a 'subjective' nature and largely depends on the decisions and composition of elite groups. Our thesis is that the type of capitalism in both states needs to be explained within this context. In the case of Slovenia *managerial capitalism* with a strong (significant) role of the government (including substantial role of state ownership in the economy and large public sector) evolved as a consequence of past development and gradual approach while in Estonia we can observe the

emergence of *liberal (market) capitalism* with only a small (marginal) role of the state. Whereas in Slovenia we can speak of a ‘corporatist welfare state’ when it comes to Estonia one can at most observe a ‘residual welfare state’ and a minimum state. What is interesting is that the Estonian elite did not take the nearby Scandinavian model of restricted capitalism and universal welfare state as a reference. The social order that emerged is thus much closer to the Anglo-Saxon model of entrepreneurship, free-market ideology and the limited role of the state.

However, the story of elites and capitalism in both states is still not over. Recent events and observations tell us that Estonia might go too far in the neo-liberal direction, while Slovenia exaggeratedly leaned in the corporatist direction. In the former the reforms were quick and ruthless while in the latter they were too slow at least until 2004. Estonia’s ‘pure’ or liberal type of capitalism introduced significant social inequalities, poverty and the exclusion of quite large social groups (mostly the Russophone minority). It is true that in Slovenia shifts in social stratification also occurred but a much more significant problem hindering the ‘meritocratic’ principles and economic competitiveness seems to be the rigidity of the labour market and taxation system. Slovenia’s new right-centre-oriented government has triggered some liberal reforms however they have been cautiously implemented. In Estonia a segment of the political elite has already started to consider a bigger role for the state (Steen 2007). In addition, we can detect the importance of the social learning factor of elites that, along with path-dependence and the elites’ creative responses to historical and geo-political limitations, is significantly influencing the course and quality of social development.

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# **Crises of Liberalism in Hungary and Poland: Can the Civil Society Salvage Political Liberalism?**

Umut Korkut

## *Introduction:*

The Europeanization literature considers elite-led Europeanization as the methodology for fast track European Union (EU) accession for applicant states. While such methodology might as well accelerate the accession process of applicant countries to the EU, it somehow also excludes the public in the accession states from the Europeanization process. This study, in brief, illustrates in the new EU member states that the ascendance of right-wing parties – formulating their social values around conservatism and criticism of moral decline since the transition to democracy – is a result of a method of Europeanization that excluded general public from the very process. Under the brief scope of this paper is the current political situation in Poland and Hungary since their respective general elections in 2005 and 2006 and the position of the civil society vis-à-vis the political elite.

Analysts of Europeanization associate this process with a progress in political and economic liberalism in the accession states. The current twist of politics in the new member states from the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) illustrates that this association is defunct. The failure of economic liberalism, under the neo-liberal canon, to bring welfare for the public now threatens the progress and perfection in political liberalism. Despite EU membership, those excluded from accession negotiations transform their disenchantment with the shape of capitalism in their home countries into support for the conservative political forces. As a result, there is a retrenchment of further Europeanization efforts, particularly as regards political rights and freedoms. Therefore, the main thesis of my study is that there is a contraction of political liberalism in the Central and Easter European states upon their accession to the European Union due to the failure of economic liberalism on welfare and income equity fronts.

## *Why is there a contraction of political liberalism?*

I suggest that there are two plausible explanations for the ‘twist’ summarised above. Below, I briefly debate on the civil society- and elitism-related reasons of contraction of political liberalism.

1. The EU membership process required 'elite consensus' in accession states in order for them to fulfil the structural demands of membership swiftly and with determination. The dominance of the political and economic elite in this process resulted in the exclusion of the public from the Europeanization process. I have previously showed the (lack of) involvement of civil society organisations in the EU accession talks in Poland, Hungary and Romania with interviews held with trade unions, business organisations and agricultural producers (Korkut 2002). Even if the trade unions, business organisations or the agricultural producers could become formal parties to various councils of social dialogue, they have been distant from their rank-and-file, and devoid of alternative policy suggestions to the imposing neo-liberal canon.

Although the consolidation of capitalism in the CEE went in parallel to the EU accession process, the public in general did have high regard for the shape capitalism attained in their countries. The corruption scandals, permanent reform, welfare cuts, exclusion of the poor from the public space, income discrepancies and lavish life styles of the new elite became the symbols of the new regime. This new canon is discreet to recite poverty, unemployment or inflation figures, but forthcoming to enumerate macro-economic gains. In the end, the symbols of capitalism, rather than progressive human rights and freedoms, become more characteristic of liberalism as such. Civil society groups that could independently remain critical have been scarce in number, and sometimes very local and limited in scope.

2. In the aftermath of the EU membership, the civil society groups are still incapable to impart an effect on the political elite of their countries. While the civil society groups establish links with their peers in Brussels, they cannot reach their desired goals in their home countries. The gender-rights, anti-discrimination, social rights, and anti-poverty activist groups in Poland and Hungary are important to study civil society. One reason for the failure of civil society groups to reach their desired outcomes is the dominance of nation states in the EU structures. The other is their stiff leadership structures or disorganisation. The final reason is their inability to offer alternative strategies either in the development agenda or in gender rights advocacy. In contrast, the conservative groups can make their voices heard much easily and they are better-organised. This might be due to their repeated tactical resort at conventional, but still-in-fashion, values as well as a lower threshold required for the public to grasp conservative/nationalist values.

The result is that the civil society cannot duly balance the enhanced position of the sceptics of political liberalism. Such sceptics not only criticise neo-liberalism, but also the collateral Europeanization process. Alongside, this camp also opposes the extension of women and gay rights despite the human rights and anti-discrimination requirements of the

EU *acquis*. For this camp, conformism with the national middle-class values and traditional gender roles in given societies is the means for success for citizens. Successful citizens are the basic components of a healthy society. This canon devolves those who cannot (succeed to) meet such criteria into the 'other'. This canon also reduces the civil society activism to safeguard the rights and freedoms into promoting deviance and marginalism.

At the same time, the civil society lacks the ability and dedication to problematise issues such as unemployment, inequality in access to health care, housing rights and alike. All such issues are well-defined under the European Social Charter and parts of the EU human rights regime. Tangible progress in these fields would instigate an accelerated support for further European integration among the general public. The civil society groups in the new member states can play a crucial role to push for reforms in these areas while displacing the conservative forces from the public sphere and their mantra that economic and political liberalism should be rejected as a part of the same package. Nonetheless, their success in this effort relies on the intensity of social, cultural and economic capital that they could obtain. The institutional structures in the new members still do not provide due breathing space for civil society organisations to become more independent and active members parties to development practices.

#### *Methodology:*

In order to test the plausibility of the loosely-defined arguments above, I suggest that studying the organisations and capacities of civil society groups in small-settlements is very important. This is due to their relative proximity to the rank-and-file as well as their awareness of local problems. I have already studied the forms of organisation in civil society groups, active parties to the local development project for Cserehát initiated by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the previous Hungarian Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (ICSSZEM). I have brought together my reflections from Cserehát with my earlier research in Northeast Hungary with environmentalists after the cyanide leak caused pollution in river Tisza. I also have survey results from my interviews with trade unions, business groups and agricultural producers from 2001. These results can provide the initial evidence towards testing the plausibility of my ideas, stated above.

I have been closely following the human rights and freedom of expression problems in Poland, especially since the elections in 2005. I have various reports prepared by civil society groups, news, and interviews with politicians coming out in English, Hungarian, Italian, and French. Though dated, I have some survey results from my interviews with the civil society

groups in Poland in 2001. In order to substantiate my arguments above there is a need for a new round of interviews in Poland and a parallel literature survey.

*Conclusion:*

If differences and rifts already appear between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ members of the EU in a matter of only a few years since the enlargement, then this might suggest that the Copenhagen criteria for the accession is not adequate and comprehensive enough to prepare the accession countries for EU membership. Beyond Poland, such political conservatism also finds resonances in other countries of ‘new’ Europe. There are signs from Hungary, Latvia and Slovakia that conservative political forces of ‘new’ Europe remain suspicious of extended rights and freedoms despite the extensive legislations of the EU in fields of anti-discrimination and freedom of expression and equality. In this respect, I argue that introducing market reforms can be a means of qualifying for the EU accession, but at the same time they create human rights problems if they instigate wide income disparities and caused poverty for those who lacked the necessary skills to catch up with the requirements of competitive economic systems. What is particular to my work is the position of the civil society, the EU institutions and the political elite – sometimes vis-à-vis – each other in discussions of political and economic liberalism.

I believe that the civil society has a position to salvage political liberalism. The populist parties in the new member states denigrate the regime change as corrupt and unsuccessful. In their turn, they offer conservative alternatives not only for economic liberalism, but also political liberalism. The PiS and parties alike in Poland are noteworthy cases. Fidesz also attempted to introduce a similar rhetoric in 2006 election in Hungary. If populist conservative forces gain political power and hinder freedoms and liberties due to the failure of economic liberalism, then the enhancement of political liberalism is threatened. The nationalist and religious right offer a program based on political authoritarianism, restrictions on unpopular groups and views, and the legislation of moral values. This program is based on a claim that the economic problems are the result of a weak and ‘talkative’ parliament, the continued domination of ‘communists’ and a lax moral environment. In this respect, the national leaders vow to guard national morals from the interference of the European Union and become the critics of morals of the EU countries.

While it is not all that sure whether this conservative turn will reverse the distribution of prosperity in the CEE to the benefit of economically disadvantaged families, it is for sure that this attitude presents the growing distance between the new and the old Europe.

## PART III.

### European Context

#### **EUROPEAN INTEGRATION: THE PUBLICS VS. THE ELITES? THE CASE OF CEE COUNTRIES**

Rita Stafejeva

##### *INTRODUCTION*

It is a widely acknowledged fact that the elites and the public in the European Union differ in their interests, involvement and the degree of affiliation to the European Union. In most general terms, the elites are far more 'European' than the public. That is to say, the elites have a greater role and influence on the process of the EU functioning as compared to the public.

The limited interest and role of the public in European integration presents several problems. First of all, can the undertaking concerning many nations be considered democratic if the main driving force and actors are elites while the public is merely to experience the outcome of the elites' undertaking? Second, the limited role of the public contradicts the goal of creating Europe as a community, the idea of European citizenship and European identity – in other words, if public does not participate in the process of creation of the united Europe, can one speak about the social meaning of the EU?

This paper is an attempt to tackle this problem of the distance or gap between public and elites in the Central Eastern European countries. The main idea is to present the peculiarities of the gap between the elites and the public and to identify the features that make this gap specific in this region.

The high degree of consensus among the national elites of the Central Eastern European countries on the desire to quickly join the EU could be explained by a triple functional logic consisting of symbolic, legitimizing and directional factors. First, it symbolized distance from the old communist regime and a reorientation from East to West. Second, it helped to legitimize transition policies by linking them with the future political and economic benefits of membership. Third, EU membership became a grand post-communist project for the national elites in Central and Eastern Europe, despite their relatively weak bargaining position

in the EU. Europe, then, has generally been seen as a non-cleavage issue for Central and Eastern European countries and is associated with high expectations and vague notions of the EU institutions.<sup>42</sup>

Both scholars and politicians agree that so far no real and effective European community or European public space has been created.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, it might be stated that the future of the EU depends on an alternative conceptualization of the Union rather than purely political or economic entity. In order to promote integration, European public space is vital for the circulation of integration discourse. It would create conditions for a greater interest and involvement of the public in the integration processes as well as increased communication.

### *MAIN THESIS*

This text presents an elaboration of the peculiarities of the gap between the public and elites in the Central and Eastern European countries that became the members of the EU in May 2004. Because of vague knowledge about the real functioning of the EU, I claim that even though the public is very enthusiastic towards the European Union in the CEE countries, there is a threat that in the nearest future the gap between the elites and public might deepen because of several factors:

- Vague knowledge about the real functioning of EU institutions and the costs and benefits of EU membership. During the pre-referendum campaigns in most of the countries the EU was conceptualized primarily in economic terms, i.e. how the country would benefit from membership in the EU. There are several problems with that conceptualization: (a) this is not the only possible, and more importantly, the most objective concept of the EU, e.g. the economic conceptualization is old-fashioned, the conceptualization recently promoted in the EU is the social one; (b) because of the lack of knowledge about the real functioning of the EU and confrontation with the reality, the public most likely will experience disappointment when it discovers that membership not only brings benefits but also requires a contribution. In addition, the support of the economic model of the EU is short-term, and as numerous research show, it cannot be applied in the long run<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Rumford, C. "Social Spaces beyond Civil Society: European Integration, Globalization and the Sociology of European Society." *Innovation*, Vol.14, No. 3, 2001.

<sup>43</sup> See for example, Delanty, Beck in Diez. "'Speaking 'Europe': The Politics of Integration Discourse." *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 6, No.4, 1999., Eriksen, E.O., Fossum, J.E. (2002) "Democracy through Strong Publics in the European Union?". *JCMS* Vol. 40. No.3, pp. 401-24.

<sup>44</sup> Carruba, C. J. (2001). "The Electoral Connection in European Union Politics." *The Journal of Politics*, 63 (1).



- The different interests of the publics and elites and the failed expectations of the publics. The elites are striving for a functional EU which is primarily able to effectively solve the problems on the supranational level and which cannot be solved on the national level. On the contrary, the publics expects the EU to be protective, i.e. to protect the social and the economic interests of the population. In this respect, the citizens in CEE countries are in a particularly risky position: they have the expectations that simply cannot be met in the EU. For example, they expect effective measures against poverty. However, the reality is that the EU does not have a developed social welfare policy and social protection mechanisms. In this respect, the EU was always good in creating inequalities rather than fighting them. Therefore, the publics' expectations are simply ungrounded and cannot be met in reality.
- Disappointment with the elites. In most of the CEE countries during the pre-referendum campaigns the elites tried to combine their European and national affiliations. The elites were presenting themselves as Europeans while using mostly national arguments in order to win the public support. In this case, the elites themselves have contributed to the distorted image of the EU. At the same time there is a danger that in the future the elites will be inclined to abandon their national affiliations: recent studies have shown that the high-ranking officials in the EU identify themselves with the EU rather than with their countries.
- There is a significant problem with the role of the sub-elites in the new member states. In particular the sub-elites (the local or regional elites within a state) have failed to serve their role as a mediator between the elites and the public.<sup>45</sup> This provides a background for the rising Euroscepticism in the country, since there is no mediator between the publics and the elites.

### *ELITES' PREFERENCES*

The protection of citizens' interest and the fulfillment of their expectations depend a great degree on how supportive the national elites will be. However, elites and citizens desire to shift different policy issues to the European level.

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<sup>45</sup> Hughes, J.; Sasse, G.; and Gordon, C. "Saying 'Maybe' to the 'Return To Europe': Elites and the Political Space for Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe." *European Union Politics*, Volume 3 (3), 2002. SAGE Publications.

In her article “Europe Divided? Elites vs. Public Opinion on European Integration”<sup>46</sup> Hooghe claims that elites back most of the policies which are considered to be ‘high politics’ and are concerned with core sovereignty, including immigration, foreign policy, defense, and monetary policy. Public support for Europeanization is higher than that of the elites in the areas of market regulation and redistributive policies (agriculture, regional policy and social inclusion). Citizens also tend to favor social model policies (environmental regulation, employment policy, social inclusion, regional or cohesion policy, and research and development).

Consequently, Hooghe claims that elites want the EU to be capable of governing a large, competitive market; citizens are more in favor of an EU which protects them from capitalist markets.<sup>47</sup> Elites and public preferences are similar in that both are least enthusiastic about Europeanizing high-spending policies such as health, education or social policy. However, the public wants to Europeanize market dependent policies and elites do not. The policies which elites want to Europeanize are the ones predicted by functionalism: currency, foreign policy, immigration, environment and defense while this logic of functionality does not explain citizens’ preferences.

#### ***IDENTIFICATION AND AFFILIATION WITH EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS RATHER THAN NATIONAL ONES***

The public, by projecting its hopes and expectations towards the European Union, expects that the national elites will protect the national interests. That was one of the main arguments elites used in the EU referenda campaigns. However, there is a potential danger that the national elites will identify themselves with the European institutions rather than with the national ones.

According to Lars K. Hallstrom<sup>48</sup>, the elites have increased their support for European level decision-making. Despite national concerns, there are more attempts to create Europe-wide solutions to European-wide problems, with correspondingly limited articulation from national level interests. There is, then, evidence for an increasing number of ‘European’ perspectives and interests at the elite level. For many European elites, the democratic deficit is not a barrier to integration.

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<sup>46</sup> Hooghe, L. “Europe Divided? Elites vs. Public Opinion on European Integration.” *Political Science Series* 88. April 2003, Vienna.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Hallstrom, L. K. “Support for European Federalism? An Elite View.” *European Integration*, 2003, Vol. 25, pp. 51-72.

Morten Egeberg claims in his article that national elites may shift their loyalty from the national to supranational level owing to the effect of the EU institutions<sup>49</sup>. Being embedded in EU level structures and separated in time and space from their primary institutional affiliations back home, officials tend to develop a sense of allegiance to the supranational level.<sup>50</sup> Hopefully, the identity evoked the EU level settings does not completely replace identities evoked in national institutions. They should be rather complementary. The extent to which officials might sustain nationally acquired functional identities at the European level depends mainly on their institutional affiliation, both at the national and the EU level. Thus, agency personnel and participants in expert committees under the Commission are probably more likely to maintain functional orientations than cabinet level personnel and Council group members.

### *THE GAP BETWEEN NATIONAL AND SUBNATIONAL ELITES*

Local and regional elites are important for two key reasons. First, they are to exercise a potentially critical role as opinion formers and/or mediators between national elites and their agendas and local communities. Secondly, regional and local elites are critical for enlargement because are directly responsible for the implementation of large parts of the *acquis communautaire*, particularly in the areas of agriculture, structural funds and the environment.<sup>51</sup>

The EU negotiation process has consisted mainly of interaction between the European Commission and the national government, with regional and local actors being rarely consulted, and certainly not systematically as part of the process. It is one of the central paradoxes of the enlargement process that, even though the negotiations for membership have heightened the importance of subnational structures in Central and Eastern Europe countries, at the same time regional and local elites have been disengaged from the enlargement process itself. The research conducted by Hughes et al. demonstrates<sup>52</sup> that there is a regional gap in terms of the perceptions of local elites about the EU and its relevance for the local level.

One of the main criticisms of the pro-European integration elites throughout the 1990s has been that they have been unable or unwilling to effectively communicate the benefits of the EU to the publics. The communication problem between national elites and public opinion

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<sup>49</sup> Egeberg, M. "Transcending Intergovernmentalism? Identity and Role Perception of National Officials in EU Decision-Making." *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6:3, September 1999, pp. 456-74.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Hughes, J.; Sasse, G.; and Gordon, C. "Saying 'Maybe' to the 'Return To Europe': Elites and the Political Space for Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe." *European Union Politics*, Volume 3 (3), 2002. SAGE Publications.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

has been replicated in Central and Eastern Europe because the negotiation process was conducted in a highly non-transparent manner between national governments and the Commission.<sup>53</sup> The low recognition of the role of the EU may be explained partly by the nature of PHARE and other EU programs, which are organized through central ministries, are sectorally driven, and consequently, are rarely delivered on a territorial basis.

It might be concluded, therefore, that the national elites can be characterized as strongly committed to the EU and its institutions, striving for a functional EU rather than for a protective one that the public expects. In addition, the national elites turn out to be detached not only from the public but also from the subnational elites in their countries. This creates conditions for Euroscepticism among the publics.

### *POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS*

It is hardly possible to overcome the gap between the elites and publics; however, it can at least be minimized. This means that there can be measures to make the public more aware and more involved in EU matters and the elites to be more sensitive to the publics' interests.

There is a need to develop a holistic view on politics, not one confined to the world of political elites and formal political processes. The key attitude change required is a replacement of the elite/monologue culture with a dialogue culture, which recognizes both the multiplicity and the legitimacy of public concerns.<sup>54</sup>

The possibility of citizens to effectively participate in social dialogue in the broad sense of the term is a definite attribute of democracy. The ability to participate in social dialogue depends to a large extent on accessibility of information and of the dialogue itself.<sup>55</sup> European governance is unique because of its essentially closed nature during much of the decision-making process.

The voluntary or non-governmental sector perceives its own role in a deliberative process in the perspective of strengthening a sense of citizenship and creating a means for its expression at the European level. The active citizen could therefore have a crucial role to play in the context of the more widespread dissemination and filtering of the information with the aim of

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Tittley, S. "How political and social change will transform the EU public affairs industry." *Journal of Public Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Curtin, D. M. "Transparency and political participation in EU governance: a role for civil society?" *Cultural Values*. Oct 1999, Vol. 3, Issue 4.

assuring more concrete possibilities for political participation in the deliberative process itself.

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Any role for the non-governmental sector is inspired by the belief that this sector has a crucial role to play in stimulating public deliberation on issues of concern to the general public and that this role can significantly invigorate not only the institutions of representative democracy but also offset to some extent at least the reality of excessive bureaucratic domination. A deliberative approach to democracy seems to go further in the pro-active emphasis put on the informed and enlightened citizenry. A more active role for civil society is seen as one way of contributing to the reconciliation of democracy and bureaucratic domination. The aim is to create the conditions under which citizens have sufficient information to adopt rational and responsive positions. In this light the political party, is not longer viewed as the only or as an adequate organised expression of the will of the citizens.

The idea is that in order to influence policy, public opinion needs to be aroused and channeled: the task of civil society or the citizens' association sector is the repoliticisation of issues which otherwise would be reduced to the technical considerations in order to improve the prospects of bureaucratic/ diplomatic agreement.<sup>57</sup>

### *CONCLUSIONS*

It might be concluded, therefore, that the publics and the elites are distanced in the new member states both in their knowledge and involvement, as well as in their interests that they vest in the EU. The public feels anxiety about its future prospects in the EU and expects the socially protective EU. On the contrary, the elites are more enthusiastic and feel more affiliated to the EU. In addition, the elites see the future EU as functional and do not consider protective measures for the publics. The elites appear to be detached not only from the public but from the subnational elites, too. This creates conditions for growing Euroscepticism among the public.

The gap between the elites and the public bears a potential danger of public disappointment with EU integration and further negative evaluations of the measures taken by the EU institutions.

There are several potential solutions for the aforementioned problems. Of great importance are here the civil society organizations. In addition, there should be possibilities created in the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

EU for citizens' participation and greater involvement in the European integration process. This would raise the awareness of and interest of the citizens in the EU functioning.

The goal of European integration is not limited solely to the political and economic integration. An important objective is to reach a socially integrated Europe. The measures for the minimization of the gap between the elites and the publics would be a step towards this goal.

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# Trans-nationalisation and European Context of Organised Civil Society

Frane Adam, Darka Podmenik and Mateja Rek

## 1. Introduction

It is known that the term civil society is of “polysemic” nature and there is no common accepted definition. Especially in empirical research we have to do with different dimensions and accents. In accordance with sociological tradition our focus is on the understanding of civil society as an intermediary structure composed mainly by voluntary associations (so-called third sector) which can be seen as a buffer zone between the micro-level of (individual) social life and big institutions on national or transnational level (Berger and Luckmann, 1995). This structure is important from the point of view of individual meaning orientation as well as from the point of view of democracy and institutional performance. On the other side, the civil society understood as a civic participation in associations has a close relationship with the other trendy concept, namely that of social capital especially in the framework of so-called Putnamian-Tocquillian model. The term or “ideology” of civil society is frequently used in public and political discourse at the national as well European level.

Moreover, the increasing involvement of civil society organisations into policy making has become one of the features of the EUs’ strategy for gaining legitimacy for their work and at the same time for reaching the citizens at the national level. The EU fosters the development of civil society organisations at the European level but aims as well at organisations operating in the member states. The transnational civic activities, that should serve as mediating ties among supranational dimension of the EU governance and the national contexts is usually described with the term of organized civil society on the EU level. Organized civil society on the EU level is most commonly understood as those nongovernmental actors that are involved in the exchange processes with the EU institutions and through these processes, either directly or indirectly, influence the results of the policy making on the EU level. Indeed, national civil society organisations seem to become aware of the European dimension of their work and join European umbrella organisations. Some organisations even open their own office in Brussels or establish the position of European policy officer in their national offices. There are also plenty umbrella organizations – usually titled EU associations - advocating the concerns of “weak interests”. The spectrum covers highly professional lobbyists, ad-hoc coalitions and loosely coupled groups which nevertheless are steadily working together. There is indeed an enormous variety of organizations, institutions and groups which are engaged in interest representation in Brussels, which makes reliable generalizations difficult. In any case, the willingness and capacity of

national associations to get engaged in transnational interest representation is considered to be a basic prerequisite for legitimacy of organized civil society on the EU level.

At the same time we shouldn't forget, that the characteristics of civil society as well as the circumstances of civil society development, fostering and its involvement into policy making vary greatly among European states and macro-regions. The aim of this article is to point to these vast differences and to show, that the willingness and capacity of citizens to create organisations and get engaged in civic actions, isn't equally distributed among the EU citizens, nations and regions. Additionally we assume that the capacity of national civil society organisations to get engaged in transnational civic organisations also varies greatly among the EU members, which can be an additional hindering factor in accruing the representation of EU citizens on the EU level. We assume that both the capacity of citizens to get engaged in civic action as well as capacity of organized civil society to get involved in transnational European networks is lower in the new member states from East-Central Europe as well as in some regions of Southern Europe as a consequence of the lack of civic tradition, longer periods of authoritarian regimes and economic backwardness. To test these assumptions, we chose to analyse following concepts that reflect different aspects of civil society in Europe:

- active citizenship as a basis for participation in voluntary associations
- the strength and density of associational participation across the European nations
- the organizational capacity of transnational cooperation of civil society in the EU countries.

## **2. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AS A BASIS FOR ASSOCIATIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

According to various authors (active) citizenship is a multidimensional concept that is difficult to define. Besides retaining an important place in the long history of political thought, the very notion of citizenship has simultaneously been changed by the changing characteristics of democratic order(s). The dispute on active citizenship in modern democracies with a comparison of the condition of citizens in undemocratic, totalitarian regimes progressed when Nazism gained power and during the Second World War. One definition from those times which has remained to informative until today states, that the difference between 'totalitarian' and 'free' societies can be defined according to the citizens' voluntary actions<sup>58</sup>. 'The vigor and abundance of voluntary action outside one's home, individually and in association with other citizens, for bettering one's own life and that of one's fellows are, namely, the distinguishing marks of a free society'. By contrast, in a totalitarian society all actions outside the citizen's home are directed or controlled by the state (Beveridge, 1948, p. 10, in

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<sup>58</sup> In his inquiry into 'Voluntary Action outside each citizen's home for improving the conditions of life for him and for his fellows' Beveridge meant by Voluntary Action 'private action, that is to say action not under the directions of any authority wielding the power of the State' (Beveridge, 1948, p.8, *ibid.*).



Palitha, Holford, 2000). Later analyses of (active) citizenship have mainly based on Marshall's definition (Marshall, 1950), which extended the notion of citizenship in three constitutive parts: civil, political and social.<sup>59</sup> Differences between citizens and active citizens can be found in the capacities individuals have at their disposal. The active citizen is namely 'more' than just a good citizen since they should be able and equipped to have an influence on public life (Crick, 2000). Further, the active citizen must have the critical capacities to weigh up evidence about public issues and not only take part in the existing democratic institutions but also be able to find new ways for social commitment and to establish new institutional forms for public engagement. Taking into account the levels of governance proposed by Held (1995, p. 235), active citizenship should develop new strategies and forms of participation at different social levels: at the local, workplace or city level; at the national level; and at regional and transnational level. At the local level, where citizens are involved in solving problems which affect them personally, they are active in smaller communities, societies, organisations and personal networks. On the national level the activation of citizens is less intensive but has more widespread results. The third level, which Held named 'cosmopolitan democracy', refers to the universal democratic principles as well as wider social entities like the EU. On this level citizens are active by expressing democratic value orientations in public, along with the members, leaders or founders of institutions or movements which are functioning internationally.

It could be said that active citizenship is more than political participation. They are alike with regard to the political consequences of the citizens' activities, but participation is focused on the results whereas for active citizenship the whole process of engagement is important. Generally, political participation is defined as citizens' activity which has influenced the political system(s); while active citizenship is basically defined as the origin of human freedom gained through public activity (Arendt, 1996). For active citizenship an engagement in different social domains is also important, which should have wider societal effects since active citizenship should be submitted to the 'common good' principle.

In the EU's policy active citizenship has been introduced as a concept which accompanies the changing notion of traditional citizenship vs. modern citizenship and as a political strategy which should bridge the gap between legal citizenship and the actual exercising of citizens' rights. Namely, citizens' actual political participation has been in decline in most EU countries, indicating that something was wrong in EU democracies. In 1990 the EU documents started to encourage more active and participatory citizenship at different levels of institutional structures – from European, national to local (Cresson, 1998). In the context of EU recommendations and strategies active citizenship should

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<sup>59</sup> Civil presents the rights necessary for individual freedom; political means the right to participate and exercise political power; social is constructed from the whole range rights from economic welfare to the right to live in a civilised social environment.

contribute, among other things, to improving the citizens' participation and to encourage the citizens' involvement in democratic institutions. Unlike the formal modes of political participation active citizenship should be invented from the 'bottom up' and result in the revitalisation of democracy. Such a multilevel activation of citizens could also represent new foundations for a coherent set of democratic values and social practices which are needed to bring different cultures and different traditions together which constitute the EU as a voluntary community.

It should be mentioned that today's concept of active citizenship is oriented to individual members of society with attention paid to disclosing the resources which should enable them to take up societal responsibility and engage themselves in a variety of existing and newly invented organisations. On one hand, the EU recommendations have emphasised that active citizenship can be learned and, on the other, that there are various non-discovered modes of practicing active citizenship which were invented by citizens on their own and which should be spread around, especially in countries and regions experiencing a sharp decline in citizens' (political) engagement. According to such notions of active citizenship, in 1995 the EU established the White Paper 'Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society', which calls for the encouragement of an active and engaged citizenry. In 1997 learning for citizenship was declared<sup>60</sup> one of the key challenges for the future. At the end of the 1990s and beginning of 2000 the EU Commission adopted active citizenship in its cross-national research programmes and research projects like 'Education for Democratic Citizenship' and 'Education and Training for Governance and Active Citizenship' (ETGACE and later RE-ETGACE).

The main goal of the ETGACE and RE-ETGACE<sup>61</sup> project was to gain deep insights into active citizenship in the »old« and »new« EU democracies with an emphasis on the processes of learning and practicing new forms of public engagement. For our purposes, we shall concentrate on the results of both projects which show the active citizens' roles in national civil societies, NGOs and international organisations.

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<sup>60</sup> Report of the Study Group on Education and Training, entitled 'Accomplishing Europe through Education and Training', 1997.

<sup>61</sup> The projects Education and Training for Active Citizenship and Governance in Europe (ETGACE. 2000-2003) and later RE-ETGACE (2003-2004) were conducted in eight European countries - United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Spain, Slovenia, Hungary and Romania. The starting point of the projects was not so much an explanation of the lack or decline of active citizenship, but the proposition that various new forms of active citizenship arose, even when they mostly stayed unnoticed and unrecognised. The recognition and clarification of contemporary and changing forms of active democratic citizenship, as well as the new learning processes that go together with it, were the methodological goals of the project. In the rest of our paper selected results will be used as explanatory material. Among the three qualitative methods applied in the project: documentation analysis, focus groups discussions and life history interviews, the results of the last are the most important for the subject we are examining.

Throughout the ETGACE project it became evident that the activities of citizens increase when organisational opportunities are available and when the public space is open. The activation of citizens is reinforced through practising participation and through ‘learning by doing’ processes. Since the project followed the practicing of active citizenship in four different social domains – civil society, state, work and private – it became evident that the co-ordination and completion among different domains is also the key to the promotion of active citizenship.

With regard to other domains, civil society has been indicated as one of the most important spheres in which active citizenship can be introduced, performed and learned. As shown in the results of both projects the learning and practicing of new individual and group practices (voluntary work, modes of self-organising, ‘learning by doing’) are more frequent in civil society than in some other domains. Also the amount of actively engaged newcomers is more significant. Citizens who are not comfortable with traditional structures are likely to search for opportunities in civil society since there are more democratic forms which enable greater autonomy and individualisation (Ivančič, 2003). More than other domains, civil society is interrelated with local communities through close-knitted networks of non-governmental associations. In this context, the civil society domain could be seen as some sort of ‘hatchery’ where in favourable circumstances – a supportive and democratic social environment and/or open and pluralistic communication channels – the citizens are able to exercise their capabilities and gain their first experiences in public activities, social networking and governance.

In almost all countries active citizens were engaged in different domains at the same time and move from one domain to another. One example here is a successful Slovenian manager who started a new firm and later entered the ‘civil society domain’ as the founder of the national department of an international voluntary organisation (Podmenik et al., 2001). Examples of citizens who were actively engaged in civil society as the founders or members of non-governmental or local community organisations are significant, but many of them recognised that through these kinds of organisation their aims could not be achieved and they entered the ‘political domain’ as members of political parties or governmental institutions.

In Table 1 below the engagement of active citizens from the ETGACE and RE-ETGAC projects is presented. From each of the eight countries included in both projects the quota samples of approximately 16 active citizens were interviewed in depth according to the life history method approach. Respondents from the national samples represented three domains: civil society, political and work. For the purposes of our investigation the respondents’ profiles for each country were analysed with regard to: the engagement in civil society; the roles and positions of the persons engaged in civil society; the levels on which their activities have been performed and the main

motivation for their engagement. Since a significant number of respondents who have been active in civil society have also been engaged in politics, a presentation of their roles in the positions is added.

As the table 3 shows, the majority of respondents/active citizens are engaged in civil society although some of them have only been for a shorter period of their personal history. This also means that respondents who are primarily active in the domains of work or politics are entering the civil society domain. Their activities in civil society are very different and colourful: from engagement in the non-governmental sector; trade unions, student, church, scout and similar organisations and movements to international organisations (like Amnesty International; Rotary Club) on different levels, and feminist, gay, ecologist, animal protection movements and organisations. Different initiatives for innovation or improvement, especially in the education sector, should also be mentioned.

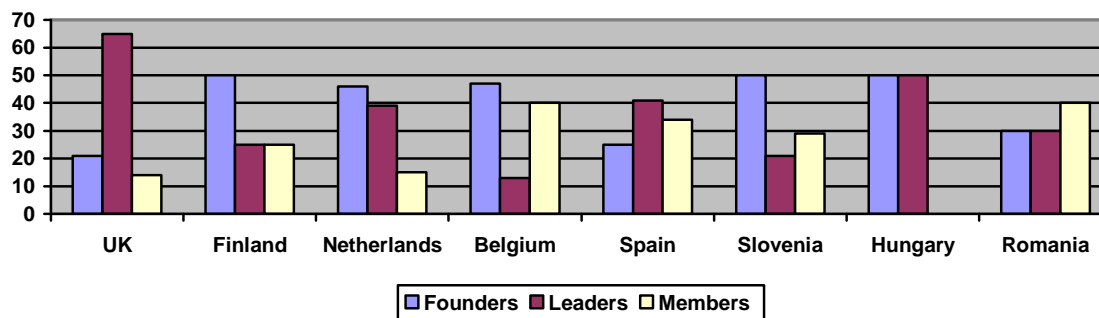
Table 1: Characteristics of the engagement of those active citizens (ETGACE and RE-ETGACE interviewees) who are active in civil society (CS) and as well in political domain:

	All Respondents	Role and position in CS				Levels			Main motif Roles and positions in politic								
		Active in CS	Funders, Initiators	Leaders	Members	Local	National	International	Family	Intrinsic	Professional	Activistic	No of AC	Founders	Leaders	Members	
<b>UK</b>	16	14	3	9	2	10	6	2	3	7	4	0	5	1	3	1	
<b>Finland</b>	16	12	6	3	3	9	3	3	4	3	2	3	5	0	2	3	
<b>Netherlan.</b>	16	13	6	5	2	13	0	3	3	7	2	1	7	0	3	4	
<b>Belgium</b>	17	15	7	2	6	11	6	6	6	6	0	3	6	2	0	4	
<b>Spain</b>	16	12	3	5	4	6	9	3	3	4	0	5	3	0	1	2	
<b>Slovenia</b>	16	14	7	3	4	9	9	4	1	8	4	1	4	0	3	1	
<b>Hungary</b>	8	8	4	4	0	5	8	2	1	1	1	5	7	2	4	1	
<b>Romania</b>	16	10	3	3	4	6	4	5	0	5	3	2	2	0	0	2	
<b>ALL</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	

Most of the presented active citizens are ‘founders and initiators’ in the civil society domain – they have established new organisations or invented some new approaches or techniques within existing modes of activities. With regard to the levels involved, the majority is active on the local level but multilevel engagement should be taken into account; a significant number of the respondents are active at two (local and international, for example) or even all three levels. As the main motivation for civic engagement intrinsic reasons are presented, meaning that the majority of respondents active in civil society started their activity from a deeper, individual conviction or under the influence of a special, unusual event in their lives. More than one-third of those who are active in civil society are also involved in political activities, but in the political domain they do not reach such high positions as in civil society – the majority are ‘only’ members of political organisations.

#### Active citizens as founders, leaders and members

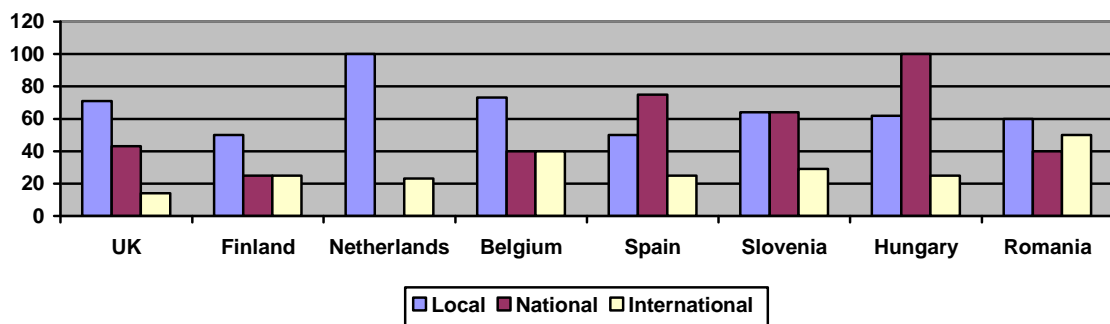
Picture 1: Roles and positions of citizens engaged in civil societies by countries (in %)



Not in all countries in our sample follow the prepositions set out in the introductory chapter where it was said that active citizens should be founders, initiators and leaders. As Picture 2 shows, Belgium, Spain, Romania and Slovenia also have surprisingly high rates of those who are ‘merely’ members of civil society organisations and movements. On the contrary, in the UK the rate of leaders is very high while in Hungary all active citizens in civil society are founders or leaders while the Netherlands is also very close to this. For Slovenia and Finland the high rates of

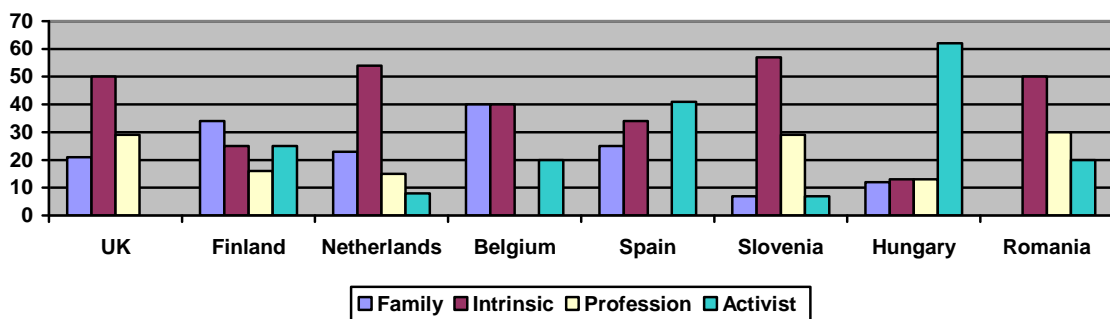
founders (with approximately the same rates of leaders and members) are significant. According to the presented results, it can be concluded that in the group of countries, which includes Hungary, the Netherlands, Finland and the UK active citizenship in civil society is connected with citizens' high leading positions and a high level of participation in the political domain.

Picture 2: Levels (local, national, international) of active citizens' engagement in national civil societies



When comparing the level of respondents' engagement, the fact that they are active on two or three levels at once must be taken into account. The local level appears to be of greater importance for civil society's engagement, where half of the activities are performed; on the national level the figure is nearly one-third and on the international level only one-fifth. These results confirm the proposition regarding the interrelatedness of civil society and the local community. Insufficient engagement at the international level reflects the underdeveloped vertical networks and weak mediating connections among all three levels.

Picture 3: Main motivation for 'being active'



The main motivation for an engagement in civil society is shown to be intrinsic (40 percent of the presented population), which means that certain psychologically important moments and events, in some examples even traumatic ones, push individuals into action in this domain. Activist motivation is more common in countries where the citizens are active in politics as well (the exceptions are the UK and Finland) With a low engagement in politics but a high rate of activistically motivated citizens Spain stands out, which should be attributed to the fact that there is an above-average number of trade unionists and communitarians in the Spanish sample. The influence of the family is connected with tradition, which has been shown to exert an important impact on the amount and content of active citizenship.

As mentioned above, the practicing of active citizenship is closely connected with a supportive social environment and the democratic tradition in individual countries. Following the results of the ETGACE and RE-ETGACE projects on active citizenship in the 'old' EU democracies (the UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Belgium, and Finland) and in the 'new' ones (Slovenia, Hungary, Romania) significant differences with regard to historical backgrounds were indicated.

Finland and the UK, along with Belgium and the Netherlands, have a long-lasting tradition in social movements. In Belgium and the Netherlands civil society was organised in religious and ideological 'pillars', which gradually lost their significance ('depillarisation') while the citizens' engagement took on new forms and contents. In Finland the movements established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are still operating and have a considerable influence. Also the forms of citizens' engagement that operated before the Second World War has persisted until today. Beside these old forms of citizens' engagement new movements like greens with their ecological and developmental co-operation ideas or the animal liberation front have been established. In Finland the long tradition of social movements and civil society has resulted in a great diversity of current civil society initiatives. In the UK the social institutions like trade unions, clubs, associations and churches were pinned to the class structure and movements up until 1960. During subsequent periods, as shown by the results of the ETGACE interviews, individuals became involved in organisations in the non-government, voluntary sector. Their activities were not oriented to collective aims as in the times of class movements, but 'single-issue' engagements prevailed.

Citizens' engagement in civil society became very important in Slovenia, as well as in Spain, during periods of opposition to totalitarian regimes and after the transformation to democracy. Both Slovenia and Spain mentioned in their reports that civil society flourished after the political



transformation to democracy. In Spain and in Slovenia so-called new social movements have emerged, such as youth groups, co-operation with the Third World, environmental activism, anti-militarism and pacifist movements. In Slovenia, during the war in ex-Yugoslavia special associations and non-governmental organisations organised different forms for helping war victims.

Hungary and Romania may be characterised by a democratic deficit that is generally significant for the new CEE democracies and by a lack of incentives for active citizenship. Hungarian civil society functioned in the period before the transition under the strong influence of the opposition and withdrew from the public to the private sphere – the family and a close circle of friends. The result was that there was some kind of underground (“samizdat”) civil society in the late 1980s. This situation changed in the period of transition when democratic opposition was based on the concept of ‘anti-politics’ with its central concern for an autonomous civil society. There are still many problems affecting citizens’ opportunities for participation in civil society. A Hungarian activist in civil society is distrustful of the possibilities of a partnership with the state and political domains, but most recently the Hungarian government launched a new policy regarding civil society organisations based on a partnership (Makarovič, et al., 2007, p. 24). In Romania the lack of citizens’ activism is in contrast to the mass movements seen in the 1989 revolution. This situation is accounted for by ineffective and derisory changes, the time-consuming process of democratisation and social, economic and political difficulties. The disappointment, frustration and alienation which accompanied the serious national macroeconomic crises turned people away from participating in democratic structures. Democratic civil society in Romania is encountering more problems than in most transition countries of the region and the average activity in civil society associations are quite low (Ibid., p. 25).

In order to develop a vibrant pluralist civil society, people motivated to take part in collective action as members, leaders and founders of voluntary associations are necessary but not sufficient condition. Also other elements and incentives should be presented, from legal framework to organisational know-how and capacity to integrate the fragmented initiatives (social capital), financing, political support etc.

### **3. ASSOCIATIONAL INVOLMENT ACROSS THE EUROPEAN NATIONS**

According to the so-called Tocquevillean-Putnamian model, the density of ‘horizontal networks of citizen engagement’ and vibrant associational life are the core factor of understanding the dynamics of civil society. Associational participation is seen as a school of democracy, as an opportunity to learn co-operative behaviour. The strength of voluntary associations – forming an intermediary sphere – is also understood as an indicator of social capital and as a sign of self-organising capacity of a given community or society (Adam, 2006).

In order to study the state of membership and the amount of unpaid work in voluntary organisations in Europe we need to focus on data that allow us to conduct cross-nation as well as longitudinal (over time) comparisons. By doing so, we can gain some insights into distinctions and similarities among countries or groups of countries while, on the other side, it will allow us to make conclusions about the trends and time fluctuations.

Table 1: Membership in voluntary organisations – WVS 1981, 1990, EVS 1999

Index (all memberships per respondent), in brackets percentage of members in least one organisation.

	WVS 1981	WVS 1990	EVS 1999
Austria	N/A	1.1 (53)	1.5 (67)
Belarus	N/A	0.6 (47)**	0.5 (46)
Belgium	0.6 (41)	1.4 (57)	1.6 (65)
Britain	0.9 (52)	1.1 (52)	0.6 (34)
Bulgaria	N/A	0.7 (41)	0.4 (23)
Croatia	N/A	1.1 (67)**	0.7 (43)
Czech	N/A	1.1 (62)	1.0 (60)
Denmark	1.0 (64)	1.8 (81)	1.9 (84)
Estonia	N/A	1.2 (73)	0.5 (34)
Finland <sup>62</sup>	N/A	1.8 (77)	1.9 (80)

<sup>62</sup> The data for Finland from the first wave should be regarded with reservation (Morales, 2004). We even recently received (July 2006) from the person responsible for the EVS data at Tilburg University an explanation that Finnish file is no longer available i.e. that it is excluded from the WVS 1981 data set due to »severe problems with socio-demographic variables«. The problem is that such errors have been reoccurring, for instance in ESS 2002 when two countries (Switzerland and Czech Republic) were also excluded from the data file because »their items on associational involvement were incorrectly formulated in these countries' questionnaires and their data are not comparable to the rest« (Morales, 2004: 10).

France	0.4 (27)	0.7 (38)	0.6 (39)
Germany	0.7 (48)*	1.5 (74)	0.7 (47)
Greece	N/A	N/A	1.3 (56)
Hungary	N/A	0.7 (50)	0.5 (31)
Iceland	1.6 (82)	2.4 (90)	2.7 (93)
Ireland	0.8 (52)	1.0 (49)	1.2 (57)
Italy	0.4 (24)	0.6 (34)	0.8 (42)
Latvia	N/A	1.2 (68)	0.4 (31)
Lithuania	N/A	0.9 (60)	0.3 (19)
Netherlands	1.2 (61)	2.7 (84)	3.1 (92)
Norway	1.1 (63)	2.0 (81)	1.5 (74)**
Poland	N/A	0.6 (41)	0.4 (25)
Portugal	N/A	0.6 (33)	0.4 (28)
Romania	N/A	0.4 (30)	0.3 (21)
Russia	N/A	1.0 (71)	0.4 (31)
Slovakia	N/A	1.0 (56)	1.1 (65)
Slovenia	N/A	0.6 (39)	1.0 (52)
Spain	0.5 (31)	0.4 (23)	0.5 (29)
Sweden	1.1 (67)	2.1 (85)	3.2 (96)
Turkey	N/A	0.2 (18)**	0.1 (8)
Ukraine	N/A	0.5 (41)**	0.5 (34)

Index membership in voluntary organisations: WVS 1981 uses the following question on membership in a voluntary organisation: ‘Which, if any, do you belong to?’ The types of organisations mentioned were the following: 1. Charities concerned with the welfare of people; 2. Churches or religious organisations; 3. Education or arts groups; 4. Trade unions; 5. Political parties or groups; 6. Organisations concerned with human rights at home or abroad; 7. Conservation, environmentalist or animal welfare groups; 8. Youth work (e.g. scouts, guides, youth clubs etc.); 9. Consumer groups; 10. Professional associations. WVS 1990 uses the following question: ‘Please look carefully at the following list of voluntary organisations and activities and say, which, if any, do you belong to?’ In comparison to WVS 1981 the list of organisations was expanded, while one item (consumer groups) was omitted: 1. Social welfare services for elderly, handicapped or deprived people; 2. Religious or church organisations; 3. Education, arts, music or cultural activities; 4. Trade unions; 5. Political parties or groups; 6. Local community action on issues like poverty, housing, racial equality; 7. Third world development or human rights; 8. Conservation, the environment, ecology; 9. Professional association; 10. Youth work (e.g. scouts, guides, youth clubs etc.); 11. Sports and recreation; 12. Women’s groups; 13. Peace movement; 14. Animal rights; 15. Voluntary organisations concerned with health; and 16. Other groups. EVS 1999 uses the same question as WVS 1990; items 8 and 14 were merged into ‘Conservation, environment, animal rights groups’; ‘Trade unions’ was changed into ‘Labour unions’.

\*data available for West Germany

\*\*data available for WVS 1995 – this survey uses a different question wording: ‘Now I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations; for each one, could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization?’ the question is followed by the list: 1. Church or religious organization; 2. Sport or recreation organization; 3. Art, music or educational organization; 4. Labour union; 5. Political party; 6. Environmental organization; 7. Professional association; 8. Charitable organization; 9. Any other voluntary organization. In the index above only ‘inactive’ memberships are taken into account.

N/A – data not available

Source: World Values Survey: wave 1981, wave 1990; European Values Survey: wave 1999

When analysing the period between 1981 and 1990 we see an increase of membership in most European countries. The period between 1990 and 1999 (with more countries included) shows a different picture, in 14 countries the trend is negative, in eleven it is positive and in five it is unchanged. If we only take the EU-15, we can see a decline in membership in only three cases (the extreme fall in membership in Britain and Germany is a surprise). In the EU-25 we again have mixed evidence, in 13 cases there is an increase or stability and in eight cases a decrease. Yet the differences are huge between, for instance, Sweden and Lithuania or Portugal.

Active membership in voluntary associations is especially important for learning skills and attitudes of self-organisation and mutual co-operation. On the structural (societal) level its role in generating social capital in the form of trust, solidarity and participation seems quite obvious, although contradictory empirical evidence has also been presented so far, especially regarding the relationship between (active) membership and trust as well as regarding the impact of associational engagement on political participation (for more information on different findings, see Halpern, 2005: 189-194; Delhey/Newton, 2005: 313-314). On the other hand, it is quite clear that not all associations are equally important and that diverse and multiple active membership is probably more important for the creation of higher levels of social capital (Morales, 2002; Morales, 2004; Halpern, 2005). Most cross-national analyses are still far away from such a selective and sophisticated approach and use very rough indications for detecting the role of associational participation in the creation and diffusion of social capital.<sup>63</sup>

Based on conventional and available measures of the active involvement we get the following picture:

Table 3: Unpaid work in voluntary organisations – WVS 1981, 1990 and EVS 1999

Index (all unpaid work per respondent), in brackets the percentage of members doing unpaid work for at least one organisation.

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<sup>63</sup> There are attempts at a detailed analysis. Some authors use the distinction between Putnam (including more socially-oriented and public good producing associations) and the Olson group (including associations representing special interests), see Fidrmuc and Gerxhani, 2006 and Welzel, Inglehart, Deutsch, 2006 or between mailing list and face-to face associations (Dekker and van Broek, 2005). Regarding the measure of associational involvement most analyses use the proportion of respondents who are members or doing unpaid work in a least one organisations from the list. A few investigations take as a starting point the sum of members in each organisation, though this procedure is quite unusual and incomparable with others (Raisen et al., 2001, Haerpfner et al., 2005). In this article we use the measure which includes not only the respondents reporting themselves as being a member or active in at least one organisation but also those who have multiple memberships or multiple activities.

	WVS 1981	WVS1990	EVS 1999
Austria	N/A	0.4 (26)	0.5 (30)
Belarus	N/A	0.1 (9)**	0.3 (19)
Belgium	0.3 (21)	0.6 (28)	0.7 (35)
Britain (Great)	0.3 (19)	0.4 (22)	0.8 (42)
Bulgaria	N/A	0.4 (20)	0.3 (19)
Croatia	N/A	0.6 (41)**	0.4 (24)
Czech	N/A	0.4 (29)	0.5 (33)
Denmark	0.2 (18)	0.4 (26)	0.6 (37)
Estonia	N/A	0.5 (34)	0.3 (18)
Finland	N/A	0.9 (45)	0.6 (38)
France	0.2 (15)	0.5 (23)	0.4 (27)
Germany	0.3 (21)*	0.5 (34)	0.2 (19)
Greece	N/A	N/A	1.0 (40)
Hungary	N/A	0.2 (16)	0.3 (15)
Iceland	0.7 (28)	0.6 (36)	0.5 (33)
Ireland	0.3 (22)	0.5 (27)	0.6 (33)
Italy	0.2 (17)	0.4 (24)	0.5 (26)
Latvia	N/A	0.7 (36)	0.3 (22)
Lithuania	N/A	0.5 (30)	0.2 (16)
Netherlands	0.3 (24)	0.7 (36)	0.9 (49)
Norway	0.4 (24)	0.6 (37)	1.0 (58)**
Poland	N/A	0.4 (28)	0.2 (14)
Portugal	N/A	0.3 (18)	0.2 (16)
Romania	N/A	0.3 (25)	0.2 (16)
Russia	N/A	0.3 (23)	0.1 (8)
Slovakia	N/A	0.4 (27)	0.8 (51)
Slovenia	N/A	0.3 (15)	0.5 (29)
Spain	0.4 (23)	0.2 (12)	0.2 (16)
Sweden	0.3 (26)	0.7 (39)	1.1 (56)
Turkey	N/A	0.3 (18)**	0.1 (6)
Ukraine	N/A	0.1 (9)**	0.1 (13)

Index unpaid voluntary work in organisations: WVS 1981 used the following question: ‘And do you currently do any unpaid work for any of them?’ WVS 1990 and EVS 1999 used the wording: ‘Please look carefully at the following list of voluntary organisations and activities and say, which, if any, are you currently doing unpaid work for?’ For list of organizations see comment under Table 2.

\*data available for West Germany

\*\*data available for WVS 1995 – see comment under Table 2. In the index above only ‘active’ memberships are taken into account.

N/A – data not available

Source: World Values Survey: wave 1981, wave 1990; European Values Survey: wave 1999

Also in this – in the framework of the Putnam-Tocqueville model – the most relevant and useful indicator we can see a rise throughout the 1981 to 1990 period while in the period between 1999 and 1999 the situation is more ambivalent. Taking the whole sample into account, in 19 countries

we can observe an increase or stability in active membership and in 11 a decrease. In the EU-15 a decrease is registered in only three cases and in the enlarged EU in seven cases. It can be concluded that the prevailing trend is, on average, quite positive. The greatest surprise is Greece where its active membership figure is well above the average of EU countries since only Sweden shows higher scores in this regard.<sup>64</sup>

Proceeding from these findings it is possible to speak of four groups with regard to the distribution of civic participation at the European level.<sup>65</sup> It should be taking into account that some countries are difficult to classify, as they have borderline scores.

The first group with strong civic participation of course includes the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Finland as a borderline case.

The second group with a solid distribution of civic participation includes (Western) continental and Anglo-Saxon countries, all of them EU members. However, it is sometimes hard to delineate the border separating the third group. While some countries are close to first group (Belgium), others are closer to the third group. Such a case could be Germany with its low level of active members in voluntary organisations (in the EVS but not in the ESS). Otherwise, besides Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the third group also consists of the Mediterranean countries Italy, France and Spain. All these three economically developed countries have lower or similar scores in active participation than the new three EU members from Eastern and Central Europe (but Italy and Spain show higher level of trust).

The fourth group consists of countries with weak civic participation. This includes both countries outside the EU and EU members. Namely Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, the Ukraine and Turkey. The differences are large, for instance the ratio of Sweden to Portugal is one to eight in membership in the European Values Survey and one to six in the European Social Survey (ESS)<sup>66</sup> and one to six in active involvement.<sup>67</sup> The southern

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<sup>64</sup> It can be argued that data for Greece are not valid, since other surveys shows very low level of membership and of active participation in voluntary associations (see Adam, 2006).

<sup>65</sup> The data from EVS should be taken with reservation. More detailed analysis revealed that some problems relating to technical design as well as to different semantic, cultural and institutional context of cross-national surveys were not solved. (Adam, 2006).

<sup>66</sup> If we take all memberships or one to five if we take the share of respondents who are members in at least one organisation

<sup>67</sup> One author draws attention to the relatively high proportion of active members (in relation to all members) and argues: 'Nevertheless, these figures hide to a certain extent the fact that in some Southern and Eastern European countries those people who decide to join an association more often do so in an active way' (Morales, 2004:12). This observation can be respected but the fact is that lagging behind in associational involvement is actually increasing in these countries. With respect to the creation of social

EU members Portugal and Greece according to both data sets but also Spain and Italy according to ESS actually have relatively undeveloped civil societies. It is the large lagging behind which has not been adequately explained or whose explanations have been unconvincing, for instance in the sense of path dependency (Chrisoforou, 2004).

In contrast to authors who argue that 'there are no large differences in mean scores across the regional patterns' (Oorshot and Arts, 2006: 160) we arrived at more differentiated conclusions. Between the first and fourth groups a very clear borderline can be drawn while differences between the second and third groups are not so pronounced.

#### **4. ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EU COUNTRIES**

The term European civil society is usually equalized with the organized civil society in EU, both in scientific publications and in the official documents of EU (Ruzza, 2004; Gudrun, 2005). The debates about the organized civil society in EU usually address "non-governmental and non-economical sphere" that functionally refers to the activities of representation, lobbying, and that can at the same time contribute to the provision of certain services. And in Bruxelles, there is an increasing number of umbrella organizations and European associations that function in the name of organized European civil society, and that form a new level of civil society engagements in EU, as such being usually termed "organized civil society on the EU level". Stone-Sweet and Sandholz (1998) define transnational civil society on the EU level as »those non-governmental actors who engage in intra-European Community exchanges – social, economic, political – and thereby influence, directly or indirectly, policymaking processes and outcomes at the European level« (Stone-Sweet and Sanholz, 1998: 9). As for European associations, they are most commonly associations of national associations, constituted by the national members in order to represent their own interests within the decision processes on EU level (Greenwood, 2002: 69). Usually a representative knot on EU level is being established (often located in Bruxelles), with the network of (national) members that consist of civic associations organized on national level. We can thus see that European associations are not direct associations of individuals – European

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capital it can be said that a critical mass is needed in the sense of broader participation and not only an active minority.

citizens – but the associations of national civil society associations that represent interests, desires, views of their members on the EU level. This is why it is especially important to pay attention to the organizational aspects of transnational civil society cooperation.

To establish the level of development of transnational cooperation of civil society organizations in EU countries – on the basis of which the predictions about the possibilities of their participation in organizing civil society on the EU level can be made – we will use some indicators that have been established by Anheier et al. (2002, 2004) during their development of the index of global civil society. We will mainly use the data that refer to the organizational infrastructure of cross-border civil society cooperation in EU countries, with the intention of establishing whether the amount – together with the level of development – of the transnational cooperation of civil society organizations varies substantially among the members of EU.

The organizational infrastructure of cross-border civil society cooperation in EU will be measured by number and density of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) operating in various EU countries. INGOs are most commonly described as autonomous organizations that are: non-governmental, that is, they are not instrumentalities of government; and non-profit, that is not distributing revenue as income to owners; and formal, legal entities (see Salamon and Anheier 1997). Many INGOs employ staff and are professional organizations. They can include campaigning groups like European Womans' Lobby or Greenpeace, professional societies like international employers federations or trades unions; charities like Christian Aid or CARE; think tanks and international commissions. But a clear and unambiguous theoretically acceptable definition of international NGOs remains to be formulated. A major difficulty in obtaining some understanding of international nonprofit organizations is the variety of organizational forms which need to be considered. Abstract classification schemes, particularly when simplified for convenience, tend to conceal the existence of well-developed groups of organizations with distinct features. Additional hindering element in clearer understanding of these organizations is that international non-governmental organizations have no existence in international law. They are organizational "outlaws". There is also no official international registry of international nonprofit organizations. Many bodies do however collect information on international nonprofit organizations in particular topic areas,<sup>68</sup> so we nonetheless have the access to at least the very

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<sup>68</sup> The most famous registry for INGOs is Union of International Associations (UIA). It is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit body which is apolitical in character. Its programmes are totally oriented toward the community of international associations whose actions they are designed to facilitate, whether through special studies or through new uses of information.



basic information about the amount of the organizational infrastructure of international non-governmental non-profitable organizations.<sup>69</sup>

It is necessary to point out that international civil society organizations are most commonly network connections of member organizations from various national environments that unite themselves under a umbrella organization with headquarters being seated on a certain location on which the power of international associations is usually concentrated. The available data (that have been accumulated by Anheier et al. (2004) on the basis of register of international non-governmental organizations collected within the Union of International Association) enable the identification of number and density of the headquarters, as well as number and density of member organizations of international non-governmental organizations in each of the EU member states.

Here, it is very important to point to the deficiency of the presented analysis, the cause of which is the absence of the data on the infrastructure measured in the context of EU. Actually, the only comparative data on the number and density of INGOs in for all EU members have been collected within »Union of International Associations« and analyzed by Anheier et al. in the contexts of aspirations to formulate an index of global civil society, the project run by Centre for the Study of Global Governance at London School of Economics and Political Sciences.<sup>70</sup> Within these researches, the context of the analysis is the world and not EU. This has many consequences for relevancy of the data in context of judging the connections of European civil society; the best way to illustrate this is to show the number of headquarters of INGOs in various EU countries. If, for example, there are 100 INGO headquarters in a certain state, judging only by this number we cannot determine how many of these INGOs participate in global and regional connections that are not exclusively of "European nature", as well as we cannot determine how many of these actually act in context of EU. Such a situation definitely stimulates us to doubt usefulness and the descriptive power of the data for the purposes of present analysis. But given the lack of contextually more suitable comparative data we nonetheless believe that information about number of INGOs with headquarter in a certain country shouldn't just be ruled out, because to a

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<sup>69</sup> The project of Union of International Associations called the Yearbook of International Organizations has long served as a convenient collecting point for such information. The descriptions of organizations in the Yearbook are based on information received from a variety of sources. Priority is normally given to information received from the organizations themselves, although every effort is made by the editors to check this information against other sources (periodicals, official documents, media, etc.). The editors attempt to detect and overcome possible exaggerated claims by organizations (e.g. membership, budget, relations with other organizations, activities). Because an organization's view of itself has been given priority, and because secondary sources confirming this view are not always available or reliable, the editors cannot take responsibility for any resulting inaccuracies in the information presented.

<sup>70</sup> Publications and descriptions of projects within Centre for the Study of Global Governance are available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/2research.htm>.

certain extent, in spite of the described problems, it illustrates openness and potential of the actors from a certain country to organize and participate in transnational civil society streams. Simultaneously, it should be pointed out that individual European countries, or EU in whole, are not vacuum spaces; instead, they represent a vibrant part of global civil society, its influences and activities. But of course, carefulness is advised when interpreting the mentioned data.

The table below features the data on number and density of INGO headquarters within various EU countries in years 1993 and 2003. Lower number of INGO headquarters can be observed in the countries of Western and Central Europe, that is in the new EU members. And the countries that positively stand out regarding the number of INGOs are: Great Britain, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, and in Southern Europe, surprisingly high number of INGOs have headquarters in Italy and Spain.

Table 4: The number of secretariats of INGOs in European countries<sup>71</sup>

	1993	2003
Austria	148	272
Belgium	1484	1855
Cyprus	6	17
Czech Republic	39	47
Denmark	220	246
Estonia	1	5
Finland	99	141
France	1334	1405
Greece	38	94
Ireland	44	62
Iceland	12	18
Italy	412	544
Latvia	0	14
Lithuania	1	5
Luxemburg	45	43

<sup>71</sup> This table gives the total number of secretariats of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in a given country in the EU for 1993 and 2003. These are the principal secretariats (headquarters, main office) of the organization. The table also indicates the expansion or contraction in the number of INGO secretariats by country over the time period from 1993 – 2003. Data have been restructured by Anheier et al. (2004) from more comprehensive country and organization coverage in the Yearbook of International Organizations for 1993 and 2003. The sample of organizations used is international NGOs (non-profit) including following types of INGOs: Federations of international organizations; Universal membership organizations; Intercontinental membership organizations; Regionally oriented membership organizations; Organizations emanating from places, persons or bodies; Organizations of special form, including foundations and funds and Internationally oriented organizations.

Hungary	40	64
Germany	637	987
Netherlands	523	817
Norway	132	176
Poland	30	47
Portugal	36	66
Slovakia	4	12
Slovenia	8	17
Spain	131	301
Sweden	255	331
Switzerland	593	717
GB	1272	1923

Source: Anheier et al. (2004): Global Civil Society Yearbook 2004/05, 304–309. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook04chapters.htm>.

The described situation to some extent changes if we use density of headquarters of INGOs in EU countries instead of simple counting of secretariats; here we measure the number of secretariats (headquarters) of INGOs per million of population in European countries (in the table below, we can see the situation in years 1993 and 2003).

Table 5: Density of INGOs (the number of secretariats per one million of population) in European countries<sup>72</sup>

	1993	2003
Austria	18,7	33,4
Belgium	147,7	179,9
Cyprus	8,5	22,2
Czech Republic	3,8	4,6
Denmark	42,5	45,8

<sup>72</sup> This table indicates the number of secretariats per million of the population, that is, density of secretariats of INGOs in a given country for 1993 and 2003. The table also indicates the expansion or contraction in the density of INGO secretariats by country over the time period from 1993-2003. Data have been restructured by Anheier et al. (2004) from more comprehensive country and organization coverage in the Yearbook of International Organizations. The sample of organizations used is international NGOs (non-profit) including following types of INGOs: Federations of international organizations; Universal membership organizations; Intercontinental membership organizations; Regionally oriented membership organizations; Organizations emanating from places, persons or bodies; Organizations of special form, including foundations and funds and Internationally oriented organizations.

Estonia	0,6	3,5
Finland	19,6	27,2
France	23,3	23,4
Greece	3,7	8,9
Ireland	12,4	16
Iceland	46,3	64,4
Italy	7,2	9,4
Latvia	0	5,9
Lithuania	0,3	1,4
Luxemburg	114,6	95,4
Hungary	3,9	6,3
Germany	7,9	12
Netherlands	34,5	50,7
Norway	30,8	38,8
Poland	0,8	1,2
Portugal	3,6	6,5
Slovakia	0,8	2,2
Slovenia	4,2	8,8
Spain	3,3	7,5
Sweden	29,2	37
Switzerland	84,8	97,4
GB	22	32,1

Source: Anheier et al. (2004): Global Civil Society Yearbook 2004/05, 304–309. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook04chapters.htm>.

Regarding the density of INGO headquarters the countries standing out are Belgium, Switzerland, and Luxemburg, but also Scandinavian states (Iceland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) and Netherlands are reaching a high density of INGOs (though a lot lower than the first three ones). The density of headquarters of INGOs in countries of Southern Europe (including Italy) is quite marginal, but not compared to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where the density of headquarters is very low, if we compare it to the countries of Northern and Western Europe, in spite of the fact that it increased considerably in past ten years (in Hungary, for example, organizational density increased from 3,6 to 6,3 % in years 1993 to 2004 and in Slovenia from 4,2 to 8,8 %, to mention only the countries which measure the biggest organizational density increase).

But if we examine number and density of civil society organizations, which are members of INGOs in each of the European countries (in the years 1993 and 2003), we get somewhat different picture. Table 6 containing the number of the organizations affiliated to INGOs in EU countries shows substantial difference between the new and the old members of EU, i.e. the former having considerably lower degree of INGO membership than the latter. Lower number of INGO memberships can be observed in the countries of Eastern and Middle Europe, and in smaller countries like Cyprus, Iceland, and Luxemburg.

Table 6: The number of civil society organizations affiliated in INGOs in European countries<sup>73</sup>

	1993	2003
Austria	3162	4741
Belgium	4295	5841
Cyprus	854	1421
Czech Republic		3460
Denmark	3747	5010
Estonia	367	1673
Finland	3134	4733
France	4847	6755
Greece	2606	3854
Ireland	2528	3790
Iceland	1267	1775
Italy	4364	6085
Latvia	263	1456
Lithuania	319	1606
Luxemburg	1725	2167
Hungary	2166	3630
Germany	4707	6652
Netherlands	4308	6005
Norway	3181	4478
Poland	2247	3768
Portugal	2889	4206
Slovakia		2226

<sup>73</sup> This table indicates the extent to which civic organizations in each country are members of INGOs, both for 1993 and 2003. Whether a civic organization, which is a member of INGO has a million members or a single member in a given country, this is counted as one membership. So a count of 100 for a country means that 100 civic organizations which are members of INGOs have at least one member or member organization in that country. Data have been restructured by Anheier et al. (2004) from more comprehensive country and organization coverage in the Yearbook of International Organizations for 1993 and 2003.

Slovenia	386	2169
Spain	4014	5782
Sweden	3675	5413
Switzerland	3780	5357
GB	4554	6509

Source: Anheier et al. (2004): *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2004/05*, 304–309. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook04chapters.htm>.

It is encouraging, though, to see that the level of memberships in INGOs is increasing considerably in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In the period of ten years (between 1993 and 2003), the biggest increase of civil society organizations affiliated to INGOs was witnessed in Estonia (from 367 to 1673), Latvia (from 263 to 1456), Lithuania (from 386 to 1606), and in Slovenia (from 386 to 2169). Yet the increase of number of affiliations to INGOs is a general tendency that is present in every EU country, showing better and better international binding of the civil society sector. The biggest number of civil society organizations affiliated to INGOs can be found in France, Germany, Great Britain, and, surprisingly, Italy, while in smaller countries like Iceland and Luxemburg, the absolute number of civil society organizations affiliated to INGOs is lower. This is the reason why analysis should be based on the density (according to the size of population) of organizational membership in INGOs in EU countries.<sup>74</sup> As the table 4 below shows, the picture of the density of organizational affiliations to INGOs is now completely changed, since lately small countries like Iceland, Luxemburg, Cyprus, Estonia and Slovenia, due to their small size and correspondingly relatively big number of organizations affiliated to INGOs, show high level of density of INGO membership, while bigger countries like Germany, Great Britain and France that traditionally had many headquarters and many international affiliations lately are reaching a lot lower scores regarding the number of these organizations per number of population. The data that describe the situation in new EU members are also interesting. Some of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are actually reaching or even surpassing the average density of organizational membership in EU countries (like Slovenia, Estonia Latvia). Some other, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Hungary, are gradually catching up, while Poland, as the biggest new member, is well behind.

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<sup>74</sup> This means the level of organizational membership in INGO, represented by the number of members per million of population in various EU countries in years 1993 and 2003.

Table 7: The density of civil society organizations affiliated to INGOs (the number of members per million of population) in European countries<sup>75</sup>

	1993	2003
Austria	399,5	581,8
Belgium	427,5	566,4
Cyprus	1207,4	1851,9
Czech Republic	/	337,4
Denmark	724,6	932,1
Estonia	237,5	1181,8
Finland	621,7	911,4
France	84,5	112,7
Greece	252,4	363,5
Ireland	710,6	977
Iceland	4891,7	6353,3
Italy	76,8	105
Latvia	100	615,3
Lithuania	86,1	446
Luxemburg	4394,3	4807,2
Hungary	209,3	360
Germany	58,4	80,8
Netherlands	283,9	372,5
Norway	742,1	987,3
Poland	58,6	97,6
Portugal	291,4	417,1
Slovakia	/	411,5
Slovenia	204,1	1122,1
Spain	101,5	144
Sweden	421,5	604,5
Switzerland	540,4	727,7
GB	78,7	108,6

Source: Anheier et al. (2004): Global Civil Society Yearbook 2004/05, 304–309. Available at:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook04chapters.htm>.

<sup>75</sup> The table offers data on membership density for each country in the EU, expressed as the number of organizational memberships in INGOs per 1 million of population, for the same years, and also presents the percentage growth during the decade. Data have been restructured by Anheier et al. (2004) from more comprehensive country and organization coverage in the Yearbook of International Organizations for 1993 and 2003.

As indicated by Anheier (2002: 7), international organizations of civil society are, on a world scale, concentrated in Northern and Western Europe and USA. The interesting fact is that as much as 60 % of secretariats of INGOs that work on global scale are seated in the old EU member states, and a third of their member organizations come from the states of Western and Northern Europe. And in the year 2002, for example, more than half of all the meetings of international civil society organizations were held in the countries of Western and Northern Europe. Anheier (2002) also states that Western European region is the most densely globalized, the term under which the concentration of global capitalism is understood, measured by the presence of transnational corporations and the meaning of tradition of foreign investments. At the same time this area is also reaching the highest scores if we measure the growth of interconnectedness of population in terms of the use of internet and the quantity of tourism. Similarly, the area significantly stands out in terms of “global awareness”, compared to other parts of the world, which is, according to Anheier, proved by the absence of violations of human rights, and by high level of tolerance and solidarity. The interesting exceptions that somehow do not belong to the circle of “traditional centers” of global civil society infrastructure are Belgium and Luxemburg. It is reasonable to believe that infrastructurally well represented and organized civil society on the level of EU in both countries (particularly in their capitals)<sup>76</sup> is due to institutional centralization and concentration of political centers of EU in both of the capitals.

Yet how important the presence of INGOs (and not only the affiliation to an INGO) in a certain state is can easily be grasped from the following data on the number of INGOs (in each country of EU) that have advisory status within Council of Europe, the consequence of which is, if we simplify it substantially, better chance to influence the decisions of this European institution.

Table 8: The number of INGOs with participatory status at Council of Europe in various countries of European Union<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> If we compare the number of INGOs in Belgium (1665) and the number of INGO headquarters in Bruxelles (1428), we can see that they are mainly concentrated in the capital (Union of International Associations, the data for the year 2002).

<sup>77</sup> Council of Europe acknowledges the influence of non-governmental organizations since 1952, when international non-governmental organizations were given the chance to acquire the status of advisor. Beside international non-governmental organizations there are also some national non-governmental organizations working within Council of Europe. Council of Europe encourages the dialogue with non-governmental organizations, in order to: a) comprehend the opinions, views and aspirations of European citizens; b) to ensure their direct representation; c) publish their activities. INGOs with participatory status within Council of Europe have the following benefits: a. they may address memoranda to the Secretary General for submission to the committees, as well as to the Commissioner for Human Rights; b. may be invited to provide, through their specific activity or experience, expert advice on Council of Europe policies,



	2005
France	90
Belgium	85
GB	42
Switzerland	32
Germany	22
Netherlands	19
Italy	16
Austria	13
Denmark	7
Hungary	5
Finland	3
Greece	3
Sweden	3
Spain	2
Czech Republic	1
Ireland	1
Slovenia	1

Source: Glasius, Marlies et al. (2005): Global Civil Society 2005/06, 416-419. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook05.htm>.

We can see that the greatest number of INGOs with participatory status within Council of Europe come exactly from the states with considerably high number of INGO headquarters – from France, Belgium, Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, and Netherlands. It is quite interesting to establish the reasons for choosing the location of INGO headquarters. There is no easy answer to this question, as the choice for the headquarters may be dictated by several factors. Circumstances will probably dictate that the secretariat be located in a place convenient to the most active participants. Yet the choice of the location for INGO headquarters is affected also by the vicinity of political and economical centers of power and the sources of financial means (the donors). And according to Salomon (2003), the decision about the location of headquarter is dependent also on the legislation of the considered country. If the organization needs to be able to receive funds as a

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programs and actions; c. shall receive the agenda and public documents of the Parliamentary Assembly in order to facilitate their attendance at public sittings of the Parliamentary Assembly; d. shall be invited to public sittings of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe; e. shall be invited to activities organized for them by the Secretariat; f. shall be invited to attend seminars, conferences, colloquies of interest to their work according to the applicable Council of Europe rules.

distinct legal entity, then the question of the legal status of the organization may become a very important factor in determining where the secretariat is located. Very few countries in the EU have arrangements to facilitate the presence of secretariats of international NGOs within their jurisdiction (Belgium is one exception). The INGO is obliged to register itself as a national organization of that country or a "foreign" association, if it is permitted to establish itself at all. Many obstacles are thus created to INGO activity, particularly in the Central and Eastern countries and developing countries. This is a major obstacle to (a) increasing the representativeness of INGO membership and to (b) ensuring that more INGOs have their headquarters or secretariats outside the North-West group of countries whose legislation is somewhat more open to association activity (Martens, 2002).

Even when we observe the number of civil society organizations that are affiliated to an INGO in a certain country, we can see that the number of such organization is much higher in the old EU members, especially the countries like France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands and Belgium. These are at the same time the countries with the highest rate of INGO headquarters. The number of INGO members from new EU member states is incomparably lower than from the old ones (yet it is necessary to point out that there are important differences among various countries, both the old and the new members of EU, so dividing the whole sample only into two poles, namely the old and the new members, is problematic if we do not consider their heterogeneity, in spite of the fact that polarization does exist).

It is on the other hand to some extent more complicated to understand the meaning and applicability of some information about the density of INGO headquarters and the density of membership of civil society organizations in INGOs within each EU state according to the number of inhabitants. In general we can establish that the density of the secretariats of INGOs is higher in the states of Northern and Western Europe, followed by the states of Southern Europe, while on the very end of the list, there are the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Slovenia being the exception). At the same time, we cannot overlook the exceptions that do not have a simple explanation, for example very low density of INGO secretariats in Germany, or relatively high density of INGO headquarters in Cyprus. And if we observe the density of civil society organization memberships in INGOs in European countries, we get a rather surprising result, namely, in the same countries that have developed a very numerous organizational infrastructure of both INGO headquarters and the members of INGOs, such as Great Britain, Germany and France, relative density of affiliations to INGOs is very low. Opposed to these, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have relatively high density of memberships in INGOs, taken into

consideration that the infrastructure of civil society organization memberships in INGOs is actually very underdeveloped in these countries. Scandinavian example seems quite ideal – the rate of civil society organization membership in INGOs is medially developed, but regarding the population number, the civil society organization network is relatively dense. Unfortunately, these data do not allow us to determine how representative these organizations are. For that, we would need the data on how many inhabitants are actually members of civil society organizations affiliated to INGOs. Unfortunately, such information is not available at the moment.

Based on the analyzed data we can confirm that the amount, and the development, of transnational cooperation of civil society organizations from various EU member states vary significantly. We can establish that in international civil society environment civil society organizations from Central and Eastern Europe are less numerous than the ones from Western and Northern Europe, while the density of affiliations to INGOs by civil society organizations is comparable among the old and the new EU member states; and sometimes, the density in the new states is even much better (like in Slovenia, Estonia, Slovakia). But as it was already stated, these data do not allow us to make conclusions about actual participation of people in INGOs, they can only give a general idea on how developed the organizational infrastructure of INGOs is in certain EU state.

The more accurate idea about the development of civil society and the development of transnational civil society cooperation in EU states can be provided by the index of global civil society that gives the data on the density of organizational infrastructure, as well as the index of participation and civility. The Global Civil Society Index is a composite measure of separate component indicators, each measuring a distinct aspect. It covers two units of analysis: organizations and individuals. Specifically, *infrastructure* refers to the density of international NGOs and associations in a particular country. In the index results presented in the chart below, the infrastructure measure reports on organization-based data provided by the Union of International Associations (1905–1999/2000). *Civility* is a measure of cosmopolitan values such as tolerance. Data for these measures are from European Values Survey (Halman 2001). *Participation* is a measure of individual involvement in, and voluntary work for, organizations, associations, or networks related to global civil society and political action and would complement organization-based indicators, and link the civil society to measures of social capital. Data for these measures are from European Values Survey (Halman 2001).

Table 9: Index of Global Civil Society (IGCS) in European Countries

Country	Organizational Infrastructure <sup>78</sup>	Civility <sup>79</sup>	Participation <sup>80</sup>	Index of Global Civil Society (IGCS)	Rank of IGCS
Sweden	0,61	1	1	1	1
Iceland	1	0,78	0,56	0,88	2
Denmark	0,69	0,8	0,8	0,86	3
Netherlands	0,55	0,88	0,79	0,83	4
Luxemburg	0,97	0,62	0,57	0,77	5
Belgium	0,61	0,7	0,78	0,76	6
Finland	0,68	0,64	0,62	0,7	7
France	0,35	0,69	0,78	0,64	8
Ireland	0,7	0,54	0,51	0,61	9
Switzerland	0,57	0,57	0,48	0,59	10
UK	0,55	0,55	0,65	0,53	11
Austria	0,6	0,44	0,45	0,5	12
Italy	0,32	0,45	0,59	0,44	13
Czech Republic	0,5	0,28	0,55	0,43	14
Slovenia	0,69	0,32	0,24	0,38	15

<sup>78</sup> The indicator of infrastructure is calculated from the data on density of headquarters of international organisations (number of headquarters per 1 million of population) in a given country based on reports on organisation-based data provided by the Union of International Associations (1905–1999/2000).

<sup>79</sup> Using two different questions from the latest available European Values Survey (EVS) the indicator of civility present the idea of tolerance as part of a general value system and as an attitudinal measure of discrimination against ‘outsiders’. The index is calculated from the data gathered in EVS (Halman, 2001) as answer to following questions: 1.) ‘Here is a list of qualities which children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important?’ (Multiple responses possible.): Tolerance and respect for other people; Independence; Responsibility; Obedience; Unselfishness. 2.) ‘On this list are various groups of people. Could you please tell me any that you would not, generally speaking, like to have as your neighbours?’ (Multiple responses possible): People of different races; Immigrants/foreign workers.

<sup>80</sup> The indicator of participations is calculated from the data gathered in EVS (Halman, 2001) that shows the extent to which respondents are members of and volunteering in community action groups, organisations concerned with the environment, those concerned with development and human rights, and peace organisations. The following question was asked: ‘Look carefully at the following list of voluntary organisations and activities and say... a) Which, if any, do you belong to? b) Which, if any, are you currently doing unpaid work for? The list of organisations: Community action on issues like poverty, employment, housing, racial equality; Third world development and human rights; Environment, conservation, ecology and Peace movement. The index also includes the data on the extent to which people are prepared to take political action for or against a particular cause, which can be considered as a general measure of political mobilisation. This record, based on the latest European Values Survey (Halman, 2001), shows the percentages of respondents who say they have taken part in specific actions (signing a petition, joining a boycott, attending a lawful demonstration, joining an unofficial strike, or occupying a building) for or against a particular cause.

Spain	0,37	0,5	0,34	0,37	16
Germany	0,28	0,41	0,46	0,34	17
Greece	0,53	0,11	0,49	0,33	18
Latvia	0,59	0,33	0,18	0,32	19
Estonia	0,71	0,23	0,08	0,29	20
Slovakia	0,54	0,11	0,39	0,29	21
Poland	0,3	0,28	0,15	0,16	22
Lithuania	0,54	0,02	0,11	0,12	23
Hungary	0,52	0,09	0	0,1	24

Source: Anheier, Helmut and Sally, Stares (2002): *Introducing the Global Civil Society Index*. V: Glasius, Marlies et. al (eds.): *Global Civil Society 2002*, Oxford University Press, 248.

As far as the position of the states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) on the index of global civil society is concerned, we can see from the table 8 that some of CEE countries (Slovenia and Czech Republic for example) are placed above some old EU member states (Southern European countries and, surprisingly again, Germany), while most of CEE countries (Latvia, Slovakia, Estonia, Poland, Lithuania and Hungary) are placed at the very bottom of the scale. Yet sorting the states according to the index of global civil society is rather different from the classification of the states according to the density of membership in INGOs – if anything, we can state that the density of membership in CEE countries is similar to the density in Western Europe, in some cases even better (in Slovenia, Estonia and Slovakia). Slovenia, Czech Republic and Slovakia are also similar to the states of Southern Europe concerning the participation and civility. Other countries of CEE (Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania) reach lower scores on the index of civility, and some of them on the index of participation, so the common index of global civil society places them at the very end of the scale.

## Conclusion

The data on associational involvement in the European countries show quite significant variations among these countries. The most developed (national) civil society can be found in Nordic countries (plus Netherlands) and the weakest in some countries from Eastern and Southern Europe. Some new members of the EU like Slovenia, Slovakia and Czech Republic show relatively high scores and are comparable with France, Italy and Germany. Concerning the trans-

national connections and networking, it seems that capacity of national civic organizations as well as citizens of the states of EU to get engaged in transnational civic organizations on the EU level, varies greatly among the EU members, which can be an additional (but not the only) hindering factor in accruing the representation of EU citizens from various members of the EU on the EU level. But on the same ground, based on the same data, we can also doubt the presupposition that in transnational civil society environments in EU, individual citizens as well as civil society organizations from new EU members (ex socialistic countries in particular) receive poorer representation, since we can establish that in some of the countries, like Slovenia, Estonia and Czech Republic, the density of organization membership in INGOs and participation in civil society organization is even much better than in many old EU member states.

We can also establish that it is difficult to talk of homogenous patterns of civil society structure in CEE countries, since there are substantial differences among individual new EU members – regarding the development of organizational infrastructure, the participation in civil society organizations, and civility. We also cannot talk about homogenous “regional pattern”, since the differences among the countries are too big. While, based on the data from the index of global civil society, Slovenia and Czech Republic can easily be placed next to Mediterranean states such as Italy, Spain and Greece (and surprisingly Germany), civil society and its transnational participation remain very poor especially in the counties like Hungary, Lithuania and Portugal.

Our presentations and conclusions are partly based on data or findings which are not entirely reliable (but they were the only available data). In this sense we need a more close co-operation of all European social scientists dealing with civil society research (and related topics) in order to avoid the misinterpretations of existing datasets and to improve the quality of the quantitative as well as qualitative instruments in the future cross-national studies..

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